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MEMOIRS

OF

THE PRIVATE LIFE

OF

MY FATHER,

BY

Anne louise Germaine (Necker) baronne de

THE BARONESS DE STAEL-HOLSTEIN.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

MISCELLANIES,

BY

M. NECKER.

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INTRODUCTION.

AT the moment when the stroke of death has fallen on Mad. de Stael, many of her friends are naturally impelled to offer a last tribute to the memory of a woman whose intellectual qualities, however rare and predominant, formed but a small part of her real intrinsic excellence.

Earnestly as I desire to see this sacred duty fulfilled, the more I struggle to perform the part which friendship dictates, the more painfully am I taught to feel that it exceeds my strength. When I would retrace the details of a life alternately devoted to the acquisition of glory, and the alleviation of misfortune, events press on my mind with such tumultuous rapidity, that, forgetful of the allotted task, I surrender all my faculties to the influence of impressions—never to be renewed on earth—unconscious for what purpose, I still hold the pen, I suffer hours to elapse without the power to embody in words even one of those sentiments which appear to me to challenge from all mankind spontaneous sympathy and unequivocal approbation.

When I re-peruse her works, of which I once proposed to offer a critical analysis to the public, I am involuntarily arrested by each of those expressions which, whilst she lived, were touching from their eloquence without suggesting any sinister presage, but which, now that she is no more, are recalled by her friends as terrible prophecies too fatally accomplished. When at length by a painful effort I have succeeded in writing a few lines, which but imperfectly commemorate even one of her least excellencies, I am overwhelmed with the bitter reflection, that this testimony of friendship was not offered to her who is its object: reduced to a state of weakness, in which it was dangerous to excite or even to indulge those emotions of affection which appeared to form the elements of her existence, it was judged necessary to divert her attention to indifferent subjects; and though all her friends were emulous in their zeal and unremitted in their attentions, none ventured to speak of their peculiar feelings—all submitted to the restraint of silence—and now that she is snatched from us by death, we are, if I may use the expression, sinking under the weight of those words which we were compelled to suppress till that fatal moment when utterance (to my feelings at least) appears to be a kind of profanation.

It will be in vain to expect in these pages either regular details, or a connected series of ideas, or even the complete expression of that sentiment with which Mad. de Stael never failed to impress all who were admitted within the circle of her intimate affections. It is for those only who keep the public in view, to collect the facts of which that active, animated, brilliant life was composed. To her *friends*, Mad. de Stael is the first, the *only* object of interest. It is for her alone they write; incapable of submitting to any other principle of criticism than the desire to have merited her approbation, they seek not the living breath of praise; they are ambitious only to indulge the persuasion, that their tribute might have been grateful to that heart which is no longer sensible to pity or to sympathy, but which was formed to cherish with responsive tenderness, the last faithful record of eternal friendship.

The two predominant qualities of Mad. de Stael were tenderness and pity. Like every child of genius she had an unextinguishable passion for glory; and, in common with all noble minds, participated in the ardent love of liberty. Yet, these two master principles, however imperious whilst no superior feelings opposed them, no longer preserved the ascendant when they entered into competition with the

happiness of those she loved, or when the sight of human misery recalled to her recollection that there was an object still dearer than success, a pursuit more sacred than glory. Such dispositions were little calculated to secure her tranquillity during the stormy season of the Revolution, in which, from the political position of her father, she must have been inevitably compelled to take a part, even though she had not been carried along the stream by the native energy of her character and the ardour of her sentiments. After the ephemeral triumph which each faction alternately won and lost without having confirmed by justice what was wrested with violence, Mad. de Stael, although she had seceded previous to their last defeat, was constantly enrolled among the vanquished party.

It has been kindly suggested, that to silence the murmurs of discontent, to draw from a whole nation a free, spontaneous homage to the daughter of Necker, I ought studiously to confine my remarks to her private qualities, or literary talents, consigning to oblivion whatever was connected with the political subjects incessantly agitated and contested during five-and-twenty eventful years; but having always observed that Mad. de Stael held her honour pledged to the avowal of noble and magnanimous sentiments, I cannot believe she would

sanction such timid counsels, and for that reason shall reject them. At the same time I may be permitted to remark, that she ought to be pardoned for her love of liberty, even by its inveterate foes, when it is recollected, that to the proscribed of every class she became a zealous partizan, and that she was more active in lending support and administering consolation to their adversity, than she had ever been in resisting their power or attacking their principles: to unfortunate emigrants her house was an asylum; they found a resource in her fortune and owed their safety to her activity: it was not enough that she lavished her bounty, that she offered a place of refuge which her courage rendered inviolable. She even sacrificed to them that time which was to her the most valuable of human possessions, every moment of which was dedicated to the pursuit of glory and to the preparation for another triumph.

At a period when the neighbouring states of France were reduced by a spirit of pusillanimity to the meanness of persecution, how often did she suspend her important labours to secure to the proscribed fugitive that asylum which he had reached with difficulty, and where he was again menaced with exile: with what ardour did she consecrate hours and days to be the advocate of those destitute beings who

were without a protector or a friend! She was even eager to suspend the career of an irresistible genius, to render that genius the palladium of misfortune. It is not surprising that in some of her works this trait of character should be perceptible. Several of them were composed during the intervals she had snatched from a series of active and indefatigable beneficence; and to those who were well acquainted with her whole life, it would not be difficult to discover, in every slight inaccuracy of style, the traces of a generous action.

If such was Mad. de Stael to those whose only claim on her benevolence was the common fellowship of suffering humanity, what was she not to those to whom she was united by the ties of friendship? How well were they assured that *her* thoughts answered to *their* thoughts? That she divined their wishes and participated in their painful or pleasurable emotions? With what graceful flexibility she transported herself into even their momentary feelings—their most evanescent impressions! With what felicity she developed their most vague ideas! With what exquisite address she lent to them attractions or importance!

Even that rare talent of conversation which she almost exclusively possessed, that marvellous, that unrivaled talent, so much dreaded by

the authors of oppression and the advocates of injustice appeared in these happy moments to have been alone created for her friends, to whom, by a certain undefinable power and magical touch of intimacy, it gave even in solitude the vivid, the animated movements of the most brilliant society, and perpetually multiplied the sources of enjoyment. Even in separating from her the charm which she had shed over existence was not suspended. To her absent friends she was still in a manner present and companionable. Referring to her alone the ideas presented by new objects, they continued to enjoy her conversation, or rather, perhaps, *adjourned* a part of their sentiments and ideas to the happy moment when they expected to meet again.

It was not only in security and tranquillity that Mad. de Stael was the most amiable of women and the most endearing of friends; in seasons of difficulty and danger she was equally constant and devoted. I appeal to all who have shared her affections, whether they did not repose in her friendship with that implicit faith which is due to a protecting Providence. Was any one, by unforeseen calamity, deprived of his property? he knew where poverty would cease to persecute him.—Was he constrained to fly? there was one asylum still open to receive him.—Was he plunged into a prison?

—he expected, with confidence, that Mad. de Stael should penetrate to those gloomy walls, to break his chain and gladden him with the tidings of deliverance.

Among the affections that filled her life, attachment to her father always held the first place. In speaking of him with all her eloquence, words seemed wanting to express her feelings. All her other sentiments were modified by this principle. Her love for France was sanctified by the reflection, that it was the country which her father had served, and it even became more fervent from her unappeasable desire to see that father justified in public opinion. Whilst he lived it was her earnest wish to conduct him to her native country where she believed his presence must dissipate every prejudice, and conciliate every party. After his death, it was rather the hope of vindicating his memory, than the anticipation of personal celebrity, that stimulated her efforts and confirmed her exertions.

The writing of M. Necker's life was her constant occupation. Even during that dreadful malady in which inexorable Nature seemed to have complicated and exhausted every species of suffering, it was her unceasing, and even her last regret, that she had been unable to complete the monument which filial love would have erected.

I have just re-perused the brief memoirs prefixed to the miscellaneous works of her father. I may be deceived—but now, that she is no more, it appears to me that these pages are better calculated to discover her real merits, to secure to her the admiration, and even the love of those to whom she was unknown, than any of her other works, however rich in eloquence, however brilliant or seductive to the imagination. It is here that her soul is felt whilst her genius is developed; the delicacy of her perceptions—the astonishing variety of her impressions —her glowing eloquence—her strength of reason —her genuine enthusiasm—her love of liberty, and of justice—her impassioned sensibility—the melancholy which sometimes pervades even her purely literary productions—all is here consecrated to the effort of throwing light on one object, to the desire of illustrating one sentiment, to the hope of communicating one impression. It is the only instance in which she has concentrated in one point her strength, her energy, her imagination, her sensibility—all the intellectual and moral faculties of her capacious soul.

Hitherto, this work has not been considered in a proper point of view. Whilst the author lived, she was subjected to the influence of opposing opinions. Life is a power against

which, so long as it endures, are enlisted partialities and enmities, the contentions of interest, and the hostility of prejudice. But now that this power is broken, should not every thing assume a different aspect? And if, as I must believe, the woman who has obtained so much glory, and performed so much good, is now the object of universal sympathy, and unlimited benevolence, I invite all who would offer homage to talent, or render justice to magnanimity, all in whom genius inspires admiration, or goodness awakens sympathy; I invite them all to re-peruse the precious memorial inscribed on a father's tomb, by that daughter who is now an inmate of the same grave. I invite to the perusal of this work all who would really know Madame de Stael, who can be but imperfectly discovered from her other works, and more imperfectly still in those which shall be hereafter written to illustrate her character.—Who, indeed, shall describe her? They who regret her feebly *could* not execute the task;—by those whose grief is measured by an affection never to be erased, it *might* be fulfilled—but it *cannot* be attempted.

(From the Mercure de France,
Edited by M. M. BENJAMIN DE CONSTANT, *&c.)*

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

PRIVATE LIFE OF M. NECKER.

IT is natural that curiosity should be generally excited respecting the life and character of a man whose political career must occupy a distinguished place in the future annals of Europe. The knowledge of the human mind is eminently facilitated by examining the sentiments and actions of those who have taken a part in extraordinary events, and whom the gifts of nature or the vicissitudes of fortune have marked out for combat with fate and with mankind: but this vague curiosity acquires new importance, and is even associated with the higher interests of morality, when the object to which it refers is a man endowed with

every quality that can stimulate to the gratification of an immeasurable ambition; yet whose ambition was invariably held subordinate to the dictates of the most scrupulous conscience—a man whose genius was bounded but by the circle of his duties and affections, and whose faculties overstept every barrier but that of virtue:—a man who, after a transient glimpse of the most splendid prosperity, was plunged into misfortunes which obscured the lustre of his glory; and who, when presented to posterity, will be appreciated only by those beings whose souls possess some sparks of a congenial nature.

It will be my task at some future period, if my mind should ever recover from that fatal stroke which has cruelly blasted its hopes of happiness, to present to the world a portrait of my father in public life, as a statesman and an author: but as such a work must inevitably touch on that great epoch in the history of Europe, the French Revolution, I shall postpone to a more distant period the

performance of a duty which might rouse the malignant passions now slumbering in the grave. Yet, let me be permitted to avow to the enemies of that man, who not only disclaimed revenge, but whose pure and ever-youthful soul was not even susceptible of deep resentment, that this forbearance has no other aim than to avert from them the guilt of offering violation to the grave. Yes, let them retaliate on me alone for whatever may provoke their malice. I am vulnerable: I still survive. Let their dagger be directed against the last relic of that family, once so cherished and so envied: but let them respect a name which all upright men must venerate. Let them spare a memory which shall cast over the departed century a track of etherial light —a light emanating from earth, but sublimely ascending to heaven!

Had it been the fate of M. Necker to spend his life at Geneva, in the obscurity of a private station; had he for ever remained a stranger to the seductions of a French court,

and to all those conflicts of interest, inseparable from power and ambition, I am persuaded that merely as a citizen and a man, it would have been impossible to contemplate his character without mingled emotions of reverence and admiration; but what sentiments must not this character inspire, when examined in all its purity—its elevation, its delicacy, and benignity, unsullied by temptation—impregnable to reproach—during that perilous career which was calculated to create a thousand impetuous or vindictive passions; to call into action a thousand harsh or revolting sentiments.

It was at the age of fifteen that my father arrived in Paris, alone and unprotected, with a slender property; for the improvement of which his family had procured him a commercial situation. From that period he not only became his own guide, but laid the foundation of that fortune, from which his relations have since derived their prosperity. To him alone may we

refer whatever we have enjoyed—whatever we possess. To my father I owed all the brilliant advantages of prosperity, of affluence, and distinction, which were showered on my early youth. Even at this moment, when I am deprived of all that once promised happiness, it is by invoking his spirit, by recalling his thoughts, his words, his sentiments, that I am enabled to discharge the duties which still bind me to existence.

During the twenty years which elapsed from the period of my father's arrival in Paris, to his marriage, he devoted himself to the duties of his situation, and religiously abstained from the pleasures and even the amusements commonly pursued with ardour in a luxurious capital. It has sometimes happened, in the course of those familiar conversations which passed between us when he lived in retirement, that he retraced this period of his existence, with the description of which I was deeply affected: that period when my imagination represented him as

so young, so solitary, so engaging, and when, had we been born cotemporaries, we might, perhaps, have been united by those indissoluble ties, which are yet stronger than those of nature.

It may easily be supposed, that the pursuits of commerce had developed in M. Necker those capacities for business, so essentially necessary in the political department, which he was hereafter destined to fill. It is otherwise with literary composition, in which he eminently excelled, but to which all the habits of his life, during five and twenty years, must have been equally inimical and revolting. In reality, is it not without precedent — without parallel, that the first calculator of the age, the man whose authority is classical in finance, should, at the same time, have been one of the most elegant prose-writers in the French language, eminently distinguished by the splendour of his diction, and the magnificence of his imagination? It is in the re-union of opposite

qualities that we recognize the character of a master-mind. The feebler faculties which are formed at the expense, or supplied by the privation, of others, are wanting in true dignity and moral greatness. It is for the feeble tree to concentrate all its vigour in one branch, whilst the oak of the forest throws out luxuriant shoots in every direction, and extends to a distance its majestic shade.

It is notorious to every distinguished merchant in Europe, that M. Necker possessed peculiar aptitudes for business, and was eminently successful in financial calculations; but it should be remarked, that in every question susceptible of doubt, he never failed to decide against his own interest. He has often told me, that he might have doubled his fortune, had he not retired early from business; and he observed, that he had never felt a strong desire for wealth or power: he added, "Had either of them been the object of my ruling passion, I should have had ample opportunities for its gratification."

Too elevated in his conceptions, too ardent

in his feelings, to attach himself to mercenary pursuits, my father was impassioned but for glory; and in glory there is something of futurity which seems to produce a kind of harmonious accord, an etherial medium of communication between the thoughts of heaven and the thoughts of earth.

It was during the sittings of the East India Company that the superiority of M. de Necker first arrested attention. It was observed, that in announcing his opinions he often permitted himself to speak from the impulse of the moment, and that he uniformly became animated and impressive, whenever he was deeply interested in the subject. To the close of his life, however, I have witnessed his struggles with native diffidence, which often gave an expression of embarrassment to his noble countenance, when he had attracted notice by the recital of some impressive facts, some characteristic anecdotes, to which his graceful style or playful irony lent their sole attraction.

He did not exhaust all his resources; he

was not perfectly master of his genius, till he was roused by difficulties to exertion. His power often lay dormant till it was imperiously called forth. His mind kept pace with events. He opposed firmness to violence. He drew courage from danger; at once displaying the most noble pride and the most ingenuous modesty. No one knew better how to assume the dignity which overawes injustice. Yet he was constantly accustomed to compare his abstract ideas of perfection with his individual efforts or actual attainments; and I have passed my life in pleading his own cause against that self-distrust or self-reproach, to which he was habitually subject, and to which he seemed most liable when, by some extraordinary exertion of talent, or some sublime example of virtue, he should have had the best title to approbation and applause. Such had been the characteristic features of his early youth. Let me be pardoned if, whilst I retrace that portion of my father's life, which preceded my birth, or intimate

acquaintance with his habits and feelings, I venture to advert to those later years, in which we were intimately associated, and indissolubly united. There was a perfect analogy in the various periods of M. Necker's existence:—his youth harmonized with his age; his prosperity answered to his adversity; it was one ray of virtue that illumined his whole life; the same reverence for the supreme Being—the same attachment to duty, to religion—to benevolence—prevailed in every season. None of his early cotemporaries could have known better than myself what he must have been at thirty, since at sixty he was no other than the same. In his youth he anticipated the results of experience by a premature developement of the faculty of reflection. To the purity of his moral conduct he owed the privilege of having preserved, in old age, the imagination and sensibility of youth.

Twenty years after his arrival at Paris, he married a woman of exemplary cha-

racter and distinguished mental attainments. Her ancestors were in every sense of the word respectable; but the revocation of the Edict of Nantz had deprived them of their patrimony, and my father had again to change poverty to affluence, and a second time restore the fortunes of a fallen family. From the first moment of their union to the last, my mother was the supreme object of my father's existence. Unlike other public men, his attention was not confined to a few measured forms at stated seasons, such as might have been deemed sufficient for the subordinate destiny of woman. His affection was demonstrated by all those tender assiduities, those delicate sentiments, those constant emanations of kindness and tenderness, which can only flow from a devoted heart. Warm and impassioned in all her feelings, my mother would have been miserable in what is commonly called a fortunate marriage. It was not enough that her husband should be simply a good or liberal man,

It was necessary to her happiness that she should discover in her first friend, that sublime sensibility which belongs but to superior intellect, but which the possession of superior intellect, by producing tastes and habits unsuited to domestic life, too frequently destroys. It was necessary to her heart to have selected one only object of affection, and to concentrate in one point all its faculties of tenderness. Happy to have found that being whom she sought, she was still more happy in being permitted to dedicate to him her whole life; —pre-eminently happy, she was spared the agonies of surviving that felicity of which she had so largely tasted. Peace to her ashes! she was more worthy than her daughter, and deservedly more favoured.

Soon after my father's marriage, he was appointed minister to the Republic of Geneva at Paris. In accepting the employment, he declined the emolument attached to it—a principle of disinterestedness from which, in the course of his political life, he never

permitted himself to deviate. He did not, however, escape the imputation of pride, for having been the first minister in France, or perhaps any other country, who not only relinquished the perquisites of office, but even sunk a part of his own fortune to provide for the expenditure* which it necessarily exacted. In embracing this resolution, my father was not actuated by pride, but by a better sentiment. To repair the disorder in the finances he had abolished many sinecures, and delicacy concurred with prudence in determining him to put it out of the power of any ex-placeman to draw invidious comparisons between the stipend which he had forfeited, with the immense revenue which the minister was supposed to possess. My father felt more courage in reforming abuses when the purity of his principles had been

* M. Necker, though assuredly the best of fathers, purchased an annuity of a hundred thousand livres, which, with his ordinary revenues, was not more than sufficient to supply this expenditure.

attested by a patriotic sacrifice. Such were the simple but correct motives for a conduct which might otherwise appear mysterious.

It was one of my father's peculiar characteristics, that nothing appeared to cost him an effort. Whatever sacrifice he made was impelled by a sentiment so sacred and sincere, that its merit was forgotten by himself, and rarely appreciated by the world; and as, in these instances, he betrayed no struggles, and expressed no regrets, it was commonly supposed that my father could not act otherwise, and that his goodness was rather involuntary than meritorious.

At first the king was astonished when M. Necker declined the perquisites annexed to the office of minister; but in a short time the king became so familiar with this self-denying peculiarity, that when M. Necker was declared minister a second and a third time, the subject was never alluded to, and the thing passed as a matter of course. The same peculiarity, in different relations of life,

was frequently exemplified in my father's conduct. He pressed his services with such frank simplicity, that by many they have been wholly forgotten. There is a degree of delicacy in certain procedures, and even of refinement in certain expressions, which is not to be comprehended by an ordinary mind, and there are people so obtuse as not to be capable of conceiving the existence of any virtue which has not been literally expressed. I may with truth affirm, that a very inadequate idea of M. Necker's conduct in pecuniary transactions is to be conceived by those who simply observe, that he was a generous man. Another epithet must be invented to designate the character of one who totally forgot the good he performed not only in appearance, but in reality; not by effort, but simply by that dereliction of self, of which great minds alone are capable, the inimitable feature of their natural and transcendent beauty.

My mother, who was no less high-spirited than noble-minded, had brought my father no

portion. Had her husband been only of the ordinary standard of goodness, she would never have permitted herself to use his fortune, but with extreme caution and circumspection. On his accession to the ministry he transferred to her all his property, not wishing, as he himself observed, to have any other care or occupation than *France*, his adopted country. From that moment he succeeded in persuading my mother that he thought no longer of his fortune, and that he wished for nothing so much as to be exonerated from its management: and it is a singular fact, that she finally came to consider it as a property of which she was the absolute mistress.

It would generally be mentioned as no common proof of delicacy to devolve on another the disposal of your fortune; but how exquisite was the delicacy of M. Necker, when, to satisfy his wife's scrupulosity, he even assumed the appearance of a defect from which he was in reality wholly exempted. She often rallied him on his pretended inca-

pacity for business: but from the moment of her death he entered with peculiar aptitude into those very details of domestic management for which he had previously affected an insuperable aversion.

The remark I have made is illustrated by the following passage, which I transcribe from the portrait of M. Necker by his wife:—"The qualities of M. Necker are absolute and independent: I should not venture to pronounce them perfect, but they are integral and simple; and without alloy from any other sentiment: let me be permitted to explain myself.

"It is often said of such a man, that he is not capable of malice, although he constantly broods on the wrongs which he has received from his enemies, and at the same time, perhaps, persuades himself that he forgives them. Of another it is said, that he is disinterested, though he attaches importance to the benefits he has conferred, and requires that they should be properly acknowledged. If I ventured to

define disinterestedness as exemplified by M. Necker, I should not expatiate on his noble conduct, the purity of his principles, or the delicacy of his sentiments: I should not enlarge on the magnanimity so repeatedly displayed in his contempt of wealth: nor even mention the sacrifices to which he has been prompted by patriotism or benevolence. These virtues are so perfectly appropriate to M. Necker, that I should blush to make them the subject of eulogium; for would it not be absurd to extol a vestal for the chastity of her deportment?

"I should rather describe his disinterestedness by a whimsical trait of character, such as almost destroys its merit, or at least renders it equivocal, by evincing how completely the idea of wealth, with all its concomitant associations, was effaced from his mind. The following anecdote, selected from a thousand others, will illustrate my meaning: — Mr. Necker quitted business at a moment when he might have trebled his fortune, simply be-

cause he was grown indifferent to a pursuit which no longer possessed the attractions of novelty. His capital might have been doubled, but a sentiment too exquisite to merit the title of virtue, impelled him to divide it with his former associate.

" It was in vain that I urged him to remain in a situation for which he had conceived distaste. He withdrew from the commercial house which he had established, and surrendered to it a sum of money to which he was legally entitled, without exacting interest, or even availing himself of the opportunity to employ his capital to advantage: in the sequel he transferred to me his whole property, not retaining a single paper, nor even the smallest sum, in his own possession. From this period his fortune was left to my sole disposal. I have bought and sold, built, contracted, conducted every thing according to my own pleasure, without ever consulting him on the subject—having learnt from experience that such appeals served only to produce impa-

tience or disgust. On his property he never bestowed another thought, till the memorable moment when he was impelled by the noblest motives to place it in the royal treasury. In his retirement, and during all the various revolutions and appointments in the financial department, nothing could induce him to resume this deposit, for which he merely accepted an interest far inferior to what he would have received from the public funds. So sincerely had he renounced in my favour the management of his affairs, that he even forgot he still possessed the rights of property, and at present is not without diffidence in asking for money, which he even appears to receive as gratuitous obligation. Our interior exhibits the amiable and whimsical contrast of a great genius submitting to voluntary tutelage; of a statesman not inadequate to the government of a great empire, but whose carelessness for money is so notorious in his own family, that even his servants seem to consider him in a state of subordination; and

from the highest department to the lowest, every thing is arranged, planned, and executed without his interference. M. Necker, in short, so eminently formed for supremacy in great things, resembles the mythological deity who was destined to reign in heaven and serve on earth. I have frequently had occasion to remark, in reference to Mr. Necker, that the perfection of moral qualities is not calculated to impress the vulgar mind, which has with them no common sympathies;—there are men who cannot duly estimate any particular virtue, unless they discover in the possessor some indications of an opposite vice.

"The very name of virtue implies effort. Nor is it in the nature of self-love to value that of which it has not ascertained the price. No one has given M. Necker credit for pardoning his enemies: no one ever thanked him for the immense sacrifice of money which he has made both in public and private life to patriotism and to principle. His fortune was measured by his munificence, and it was more

natural to ascribe to him enormous wealth, than exalted benevolence. Nevertheless, when M. Necker superintended the finances, he became economical and severe in his management of money; and whilst he freely dispensed his own property, he held that of the royal treasury sacred, as a symbol of national prosperity—an instrument of good to the people."

A person, hostile to my father, has made a remark which happily illustrates his character.—" M. Necker," said he, " devoted twenty years to fortune, twenty years to ambition and glory, and he dedicated his last years to study and retirement."

To have disposed in this manner of three parts of his life, without permitting the pursuits of the one to influence the habits of the other, is, I believe, the most remarkable proof ever given of complete self-command and elevation of character.

It is obvious, that M. Necker, a citizen of Geneva, and a protestant, must have had many obstacles to surmount, before he could obtain

the highest offices in the French monarchy. It was partly by his unblemished fame, and partly by his peculiar power of conciliating all whom he sought to please, that he arrived at a distinction almost unprecedented for a foreigner and a protestant—that of being elected at first prime minister, and finally of being admitted to the royal council.

It was by his eulogy on Colbert, and his work on the commerce of grain, that M. Necker first attracted notice, or acquired consideration. In 1777, at the instigation of M. Maurepas, who, from his conversation alone, had been impressed with respect for his talents, he was appointed to the superintendence of the royal treasury, the derangement in the finances having induced this deviation from the ordinary routine of preferment.

It has been pretended, that M. Necker understood not men, because it was constantly his aim to conduct them by the principles of justice and morality, and because since the French Revolution many people

have been disposed to consider such means as chimerical and absurd; but I can safely affirm, that this scrupulosity originated, not in any exaggerated esteem for mankind, but in habitual reverence for truth and rectitude. He was no stranger to the subtleties and refinements of Machiavelian policy, and possessed a thousand times more flexibility and address than was necessary to succeed in artifice and deception. It was impossible to discover more sagacity in fathoming the views, more promptitude in developing the character of those with whom he came in contact. Several of his thoughts and miscellaneous fragments, not only exhibit a perfect knowledge of human nature, but even a propensity to satire in describing its various peculiarities. Amongst the persons of talent who have lived with my father, none will hesitate to confirm my opinion, that though disarmed by the delicacy of his moral feelings, he possessed the adroitness, the flexibility, the insinuation, which must have in-

vested, with the most pernicious influence, any man who was not too noble to use artifice, and too upright to connive at corruption.

He discovered character at a single glance: in a quarter of an hour he became as familiar with the mind as the countenance: his knowledge extended to the minutest details: he surprised the heart in those unguarded—those undefinable movements, over which art has no power, and which nature renders intelligible only to the exploring eye of genius.*

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* In early youth my father composed several comedies, pregnant with that vis comica which is alone derived from the knowledge of human nature. At that period he was anxious to see them represented; but the avocations of business interfered with this design, which was finally laid aside. He has often remarked to me, that had his plays been performed, the whole tenor of his life must have been changed. In France, the choice of prime minister could not have fallen on a man who should have been avowedly the author of such compositions. It was almost paradoxical, that the man with manners the most imposing, dignified in his style, and serious in his sentiments, should have possessed a gaiety of fancy, so original, so versatile, so

I have already observed, that M. Necker never failed to captivate those whom he sought to please. His influence over mankind would have been still greater, had he not sometimes conceived a distaste for the real but limited objects of active life. As simple representative of the Republic of Geneva, he inspired such esteem in M. de Choiseul, then the first minister of France, that when the government of Geneva had oc-

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poignant, that it might have excited mirth, even in a mixed assembly—which necessarily includes the lower orders of the people.

I have been so struck with the incongruous, or rather supplemental faculty developed in these comedies, that I was once tempted to hazard their publication; but I distrusted my competence to the preliminary labours of revision and correction, and was completely checked by the reflection, that in France the children of a great man must have followed him to the grave before the public shall be disposed to decide on his relics with candour and impartiality. It is long since men and things were submitted to the test of truth. The question is not *what they have been*, but *what has been said of them.* It is necessary to present a serious aspect to that nation, apparently so gay, but whose gaiety is rather an offensive weapon than a sportive sally of the imagination.

casion to send to Paris some distinguished man to treat with him, M. de Choiseul wrote to M. Necker the following billet:—"Pray inform your compatriots that their Envoy Extraordinary shall not come within my doors —I will treat but with one man, and that is yourself."—My father confessed to me that his first success in public life afforded him more satisfaction than all his subsequent preferment. He was sure to become peculiarly interesting whenever he spoke of himself, and of those emotions of ambition and self-love which he had once experienced. Satiety was in him less the effect of a restless spirit of ambition than of that sensibility, that elevation of soul to which external circumstances are wholly inadequate.

After two interviews Maurepas did not hesitate to recommend the nomination of M. Necker to the royal treasury. Shortly after, during a short indisposition of M. Maurepas, my father procured the nomination of M. de Castres. to the marine department. The

marshal, though generally esteemed, was scarcely known to the king, who but a quarter of an hour before would never have chosen him for that office. To the credit which my father rapidly acquired at court may be traced the jealousy excited against him. The queen, till influenced by the spirit of party, was singularly pleased with his conversation, and in general I have observed that, by ordinary men, he was liked when known, and by superior men no sooner *seen* than *loved*. The attachment which he inspired in different individuals might be considered as a test of their moral and intellectual excellence; and uniformly, he who possessed the best understanding was most ready to do justice to his merit. To illustrate this remark, I shall cite the following examples:—One of the first judges of human intellect, but who certainly cannot be suspected of any extraordinary reverence for human virtue, M. de Mirabeau, in 1789, had an interview with my father, the object of which was to procure

his interest in having him appointed to the ministry.

My father, without refusing homage to his talents, candidly stated that he could never be the colleague of M. de Mirabeau. "My strength," he observed, "consists in my morality. You have too much understanding not to perceive, at some future day, the importance of this support. Till that period shall arrive, though it may be proper that his majesty should choose you for his minister, it will be impossible that he should elect us both."

On returning home after this conversation, M. de Mirabeau committed to paper some observations respecting M. Necker, in which he declares how much he had been struck with his comprehensive mind and extraordinary attainments. Under the influence of these feelings, he gave orders for the bust of M. Necker, which he intended to place in his future retreat. This identical bust it was my fortune to purchase

of the sculptor to whom Mirabeau had given the order; and it was assuredly no small satisfaction to possess this secret testimony of his real sentiments, which ambition so often tempted him to disavow in the public tribune.

I have insisted the more strenuously on my father's peculiar talent for knowing men and governing mankind, since there were some so completely misled by the strictness of his moral principles, as to suppose him ignorant and unskilled in that important part of political science. I must again repeat, that the faculties of M. Necker had no other limits than his virtues. From the constitution of his mind, the versatility of his talents, and his captivating address, he must have been master of those arts of policy which his rigid principles condemned, and his dignified mind rejected. It cannot be doubted, that the sagacity which conducted him to power and preferment, might have enabled him to discover the worst means, and to make them

subservient to the worst ends. How often have we seen ordinary men, even such as were incapable of comprehending a general principle or a generous sentiment; how often have such men displayed extraordinary adroitness in seizing the proper moment for promoting their particular interests. If M. Necker embraced not such opportunities, it must be attributed to excess of delicacy, not to a want of discrimination. The most plausible never deceived him. His penetration might have taught him to despise mankind, had it not been checked by that sublime candour, which traces actions to their source, and blends, in one expanded sentiment of humanity, ourselves and others, the individual and the species.

During his first administration, M. Necker had to offer violence to his native benevolence, by the suppression of offices and employments, from which many had derived support, who, by this abolition, were deprived of competence, if not of subsistence. In an

administration founded on the basis of order and economy, he was necessarily obliged to forego all the enjoyments attached to the possession of power, and he ventured not to advance to preferment a relation or a friend, conceiving himself obliged to offer reparation to those whose incomes had been diminished.

Occupied from morning to night, he applied to his various avocations with unremitted assiduity, admitting no other visitors than the discontented duns who came to complain of his economical retrenchments. My mother, on her part, devoted herself with equal zeal to the prisons and hospitals. In the language of the world, it would be difficult to discover what were the pleasures, the honours, the profits, the advantages, which either of them could hope to derive from such an existence. They looked for no other recompense than the public esteem, which my father obtained in a degree that would scarcely be credited at the present moment.

In writing his political life, I shall have to

cite examples of the enthusiasm which he inspired, and of the homage he received from his compatriots and cotemporaries.*

The provincial administration, established by M. Necker, had prepared all orders in the state for an acquaintance with political legis-

* I have in my possession a large collection of letters, addressed to my father and my mother, by all the most distinguished men in France, (from 1775,) during an interval of twenty years.

It is possible that I may, at some future period, publish this collection, which can alone develope the state of popular feeling in France at that period. It will be seen, with surprise, that some of those who have since inveighed against the duplication of the third estate, and who attributed to my father the crime of being its author, were eager to address him, either to applaud the effort he had made or to complain of his lukewarmness in the popular cause. At the head of his enlightened and superior cotemporaries, Buffon, Thomas, Marmontel, Saint Lambert, Suard, L'Abbé Morellet, evince, in their opinions, a moderation and an independence, which inspire no less respect for their principles than their understanding: with these distinguished persons, Monsieur and Madame Necker coalesced in forming the holy league, which at that time watched over the honour and happiness of France. In this collection will also be found, letters from the most eminent foreigners of the age; such as the Abbé Galiani, Prince Henry of Prussia, M. de Cariaicolli, Lord Stormont.

lation. The abolition of the right of *main morte*, the public statement of the finances, the repeal of the imposts, which weighed most heavily on the people: all these beneficent schemes of an enlightened mind, (for the first time realized,) produced a strong impression both in the intelligent and the indigent classes of society: extorting equally from the patriot who sought only the public good, and from the sufferer who had been involved in national calamity, the most fervent gratitude and unqualified approbation.

Nevertheless, from the clashing of personal interests, the cupidity of the courtiers, and the jealousy of M. de Maurepas, M. Necker became obnoxious to the hatred of the minor party, at whose secret instigation the most offensive libels were published. From the sensibility which my mother betrayed to this outrage, my father unfortunately attached to it too much importance. In the sequel, he took the prudent resolution, never to peruse any of these mischievous publications, of

which the falsehood was more notorious to the authors than the readers: but at this moment my mother's grief, the only evil which was truly afflictive to her husband's heart, destroyed his equanimity. Madame Necker had written, unknown to him, to M. Maurepas, beseeching him to withdraw his protection from the libelists who had attacked M. Necker;—a false step, from which M. Maurepas learnt too well that M. and Mad. Necker were exquisitely sensible to the variations in public opinion, and, at the same time, discovered that he had it in his power to inflict on them the most painful mortification. That nothing can be more injudicious than to teach your enemy how he may injure you, is an obvious truth, on which women seldom reflect with advantage. It appears to them sufficient to say to a persecutor—*you make me suffer*—to disarm the most inveterate enemy; but political relations are of a more austere nature; and my father soon became sensible of the error

which my mother had incautiously committed.

At the instigation of M. Maurepas, and several other persons of the court, who had been disgusted by M. Necker's rigid economy, new libels were published against him. My father never demanded that the authors should be prosecuted. There were amongst them some who even held places at his disposal; but in order to contend with success against the still increasing number of his enemies, he solicited some signal mark of royal approbation ;—such as his admission to the council; an honour which was afterwards conceded to him. This application created new discussions, which the enemies of M. Necker knew how to envenom ; and, finally, when he offered his resignation it was accepted. In the sequel, my father bitterly reproached himself for not having stifled these disgusts, for the sake of accomplishing the salutary plans, of which he had so happily laid the foundation. In reality, it is not

improbable but that had he remained in the ministry, he might have prevented the Revolution by restoring order to the financial system.

It will not be conceived at the present period, when, through a series of political convulsions, the liberty of speech is vilified and dishonoured in France, what importance was once attached by a minister to the publication of any invidious libel.

It should, however, be remarked, that in a country where the liberty of the press was not (as in England) previously established, and where public opinion had acquired an almost incredible degree of moral force, whatever might attaint the purity of a political reputation, was an evil of no trivial importance: and since my father's influence was founded on the high esteem which had been conceived for his character, it would unquestionably have been injurious to that esteem had he submitted too patiently to insults which were secretly encouraged by the members of the government.

The noble mind will surely suggest his excuse for that procedure to which he was prompted by delicacy, by dignity, and independence, though it should even be alleged, that, by this too exquisite susceptibility, he had forfeited that power which, in the estimation of ordinary men, cannot be too dearly purchased—a singular fault, perhaps, which might safely be permitted to pass unnoticed. It was not, however, always that my father rested in the consciousness of his integrity. Imagination conspired with conscience to render him severe on his past actions. In his private reflections he was often guilty of injustice to himself, and was certainly more unhappy during his first voluntary retreat from power, than in his last secession from the ministry, when he had lost every thing, but when he had not for a single moment to balance on his future conduct. In reality how illustrious was this first disgrace! when all France pursued M. Necker with acclamations of homage! and the French have so

much grace and vivacity and delicacy when they offer a generous tribute to unmerited misfortune.

The King of Poland, the King and Queen of Naples, the Emperor Joseph II. invited M. Necker to superintend the finances of their respective governments.*

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* I cannot refuse myself the satisfaction of transcribing a few passages from the letters of the Empress Catherine addressed to Baron Grimm, by whom they were transmitted to my father.—

Petersburgh, July, 1761.

..... "At length M. Necker is no longer in administration. France has had a beautiful dream, and there is now a triumph for her enemies. The character of this rare man is sufficiently illustrated in his works; for the memorial is not inferior to the *Compte rendu*. The King of France was on the point of realizing the most brilliant victory; but this moment will not soon return. M. Necker only wanted a master who could keep pace with his gigantic steps."

"*Petersburgh, July* 22, 1761.

"I was much pleased with the letter which M. Necker has written you. I am only vexed that he is no longer in office. He is a man for whom Heaven has destined the first place in the temple of fame. He must live; he must double the existence of his cotemporaries; and then this star shall find no parallel, and his cotemporaries must all remain far behind him."

"At length

These splendid offers he refused without hesitation, since they militated against his love for France, which was the master-passion of his soul, and to his last moment formed the strongest interest of his life.

In his retirement he composed that celebrated work on the Administration of the Finances, by which three or four booksellers made their fortune, of which a hundred thousand copies were printed, and which is now considered the only classical book in France on the subject of administration.

In 1787, M. de Calonne having convoked the assembly of the Notables, took occasion, in his preliminary discourse, to attack the

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" *Petersburgh, November* 8, 1785.

" At length I have read the introduction to M. Necker's work, which I have just finished. Since he is sensible to esteem, assure him that he possesses mine. It is impossible not to see that he was at his post, and that he fulfilled his duty with passion. I like his expression—" What I have done, I could do again." To use this language one must be virtuous—nay, one must love virtue to distraction, to continue to love it with enthusiasm after so many disappointments."

veracity of the statement submitted to the king by M. Necker. It was easy to perceive that a man of M. Necker's character must repel the injurious assertion; and he delayed not to transmit to the king a memorial, with other satisfactory pieces, which incontrovertibly established the fidelity of his statements. The king read and was satisfied, but desired to keep the memorial from the world: and my father was assured by some of his friends who were daily admitted to the royal presence, that on this condition his sovereign was willing to recal him to the ministry; and to all human calculation it appeared unquestionable, that my father must for ever renounce the hope of being reinstated in power, if in this instance he submitted not to the royal pleasure.

My father conceived his honour compromised in the affront, which had been publicly offered him in the printed discourse of M. de Calonne; and the greater the sacrifice of ambition annexed to a public exculpation,

the more he felt his delicacy interested in exacting the reparation. I have already observed, that the strongest sentiment by which he was actuated, with reference to human interests, was self respect, or the love of glory—a sentiment which he might sacrifice to a religious sense of duty, but which he never commuted for considerations of an inferior nature.

No sooner was the king apprized that the reply of M. Necker to M. de Calonne was printed, than he exiled him by a *lettre de cachet* to a distance of 40 leagues from Paris. At this period I was very young. *A lettre de cachet and banishment* impressed my imagination as an act of the the most atrocious cruelty.

When I learnt the sentence I uttered a shriek of despair, and was unable to form a conception of a greater calamity. All the society of Paris who, from natural urbanity, and the mild manners acquired during a long interval of peace, were unwilling to witness

human sufferings, collected round my father, and openly inveighed against his unmerited banishment. In this instance my father was the only person who judged the king with candour. He repeated, that his majesty had sufficient reason to be dissatisfied with his obstinate resistance; and several years after he used to remark, as a proof of the amiable disposition of Louis XVIth, that he had limited his punishment to an exile of forty leagues from Paris, and that in four months he revoked this exile, and soon after, on the 25th of August, 1788, recalled to his court his refractory minister. I passed with my father the period of his banishment. How calm were his spirits! How serene his soul!

Sometimes he heard from his correspondents that he was to be reinstated immediately; sometimes that he should never be restored: now, that all was gained,—and eight days after, that all was lost. He awaited the course of events with a tranquillity, which I have always observed him to possess in every

crisis of destiny, when he was neither exposed to the sorrows of the heart or the scruples of conscience. At the moment when M. Necker was recalled to the ministry, he had just published his work on the importance of religious opinions, a work which surely affords a striking proof of his internal tranquillity under circumstances which should have appeared most likely to agitate an ambitious soul. It is not unusual for men of the world to write on religion in the decline of life, when the only future that awaits them is eternity: but it is not often that, in the interval of two administrations, when exposed to all the agitations incident to a situation of conflict and suspense, that a statesman should have devoted himself to a labour so irrelevant to the pursuits of finance—to a labour which will constitute his glory with posterity, but which could not be subservient to his worldly interests.

On the contrary, M. Necker, by this work, exposed himself to the chance of disobliging some of his warmest and most distinguished

partisans, since he was the first, the only great writer who animadverted on the tendency to irreligion which prevailed at that period. This pernicious tendency succeeded to the real good which had been effected by the exposure of intolerance and superstition. Against this sinister and fatal spirit M. Necker had then singly to contend; and he contended not with that hatred for philosophy, which is but a change of arms in the same hands, but with that noble enthusiasm for religion, without which reason has no guide, and imagination no object; without which even virtue is without charms, and sensibility without interest.

In the number of superior statesmen, Cicero, the Chancellor l'Hospital, and Bacon are eminently distinguished for having, in the midst of political agitation, found leisure for solitary meditation and attention to the interests of the immortal soul. But my father published his work at a moment peculiarly unfavourable to the opinions which he main-

tained, and it required all his precision as a calculator to defend him from the stigma of having become a visionary.

In every age there is a degree of virtue which must be liable to the imputation of imbecility. This is always the most perfect virtue, since it is not that which can be rendered the object of selfish speculation.

The second administration of M. Necker from the 25th of August, 1788, to the 14th of July, 1789, is precisely that period which a powerful party in France have been most eager to vilify by malicious representation. Let me here repeat, that I pledge myself (when I shall write the political life of my father) to prove, from the history of the Revolution, that this party has constantly laboured under misconception respecting its true interests, the progress of events, and individual character.

It is acknowledged by all who have studied the conduct and writings of M. Necker, that he never for one moment entertained

the idea of producing the French Revolution.

It was his favourite theory, that the best form of government for a great state was a limited monarchy, similar to that of which England offers an example. The same thought pervades all his writings, and it must be admitted by the partisans of every political system, that the love of liberty and of order acquires double force from wisdom and magnanimity: but the political opinions of my father were, like himself, subordinate to moral principle. Conscious of his duties towards the king, as his minister, he dreaded the consequences of an insurrectional movement, which might endanger the safety and the life of human beings. His only fault as a statesman, in the vulgar sense of the word, was that of being equally scrupulous on the means and the end, that he pursued the moral not only in the object proposed, but in the very means which are proposed for its attainment. How was it possible, with such a character,

and in the situation of minister to the king, that he should become the instrument of a revolution which must eventually subvert the throne? That he loved liberty cannot be doubted. To what man of genius and of principle can it be indifferent? But duty always appeared to him to possess more sacred authority than the noblest human sentiments. In the order of our duties, the most imperious are those which bind us individually as man to man; for the more distant the relation, the less precise is the obligation.

On assuming the helm of government, M. Necker represented to the king, that if such circumstances should ever occur as to render the severity and sternness of a Richelieu necessary, he should no longer be capable of filling the office of minister: so long as reason and probity were sufficient, he trusted he should not be found incompetent to his service. In reality, when the history of the French Revolution shall become a subject of reflection to enlightened minds; when the

men who took in it the most active part shall have ceased to exist, I am persuaded that the life and writings of M. Necker will recall the discussion of that ancient and interesting question, how far virtue is compatible with policy, and whether it can be advantageous for nations that the party by which they are governed, should ever deviate from the rigid principles of morality?

In the answer to this question is involved the censure or approbation of M. Necker. But admitting, that as a public man he should not escape blame, how glorious is the condemnation which is founded on an excess of virtue! How honorable to be cast in such a cause, with the privilege of appealing to the experience of future ages!—to that impartial testimony which is alone paramount to the sentiment on which it is to pronounce judgment, the conscience of an honest man.

M. Necker has constantly maintained, that the king was pledged to the convocation of the States-general, before he entered the

ministry, and that the duplication of the third estate was imperiously enforced by the conviction, that the king, in resisting it, must hazard his safety, by incurring the suspicion of injustice:—but by what motive was M. Necker actuated in so strenuously disclaiming the gratitude and enthusiasm of a large portion of the French people? Was it to secure the love of the aristocratic party? —that party he had never courted when in the zenith of its power. In his banishment, it assumed a more formidable aspect: yet he had never compromised his independence by any of those irrevocable expressions, which alone accord with the violence and exaggeration of faction. He has uniformly maintained those temperate opinions which provoke hostility from men accustomed to rush into the extremes, and who are eager to support their opinions by a victorious standard.

"To what purpose, then," I have often asked —"to what purpose should you lessen your merit with the popular party: you who pre-

tend not at all to conciliate its antagonists ?" "It is my wish," he replied, "to attest the truth, without reference to any personal interest: with regard to myself, I desire only to have it known, that whatever might be my individual opinions, I should never, as minister, have taken any step contrary to the obligations which I had contracted towards my sovereign, by the nature of my office."

Of my father's inviolable respect for those duties, what stronger proof can be adduced than his conduct on the 11th of July, 1789 ? It was well known, that in the council M. Necker opposed the order for collecting, at Versailles and Paris, the French and Swiss soldiers. It is notorious that he voted for an amicable accommodation with the commons ; a measure which, had it been followed, might, by concealing the insurrectional disposition of the troops, have saved the annihilation of the royal authority ; but this salutary counsel was overruled by that misguided party, whose temerity first betrayed to ruin, and who after-

wards imputed to a few individuals the blame of those embarrassments which resulted from the whole order of things. By the instigation of this party, the king was persuaded, that in changing the minister, he should remove the difficulty; and to this inconsiderate measure, prompted by rashness without energy or consistency to sustain the inevitable consequences, may be attributed the 14th of July, and in that the subversion of the royal authority. It was on the 11th of July, as my father was sitting down to table, with a numerous dinner party, that the minister of the marine came to his house, and, taking him aside, presented to him a letter from the king, requiring him to resign his office, and to withdraw from France as *quietly as possible*. All was comprized in the world *quietly*. Such was the effervescence of the public mind, that had my father allowed it to be surmized he was banished for his attachment to the popular cause, there can be no doubt the voice of the people

would have raised him to the pinnacle of power. Had he cherished in his soul one spark of a factious spirit—had he even surrendered himself to the justifiable feelings of the moment, his dismission must have been discovered, and his departure prevented ;—he would have been brought back in triumph to Paris, invested with whatever could be flattering or attractive to human ambition.

It should be remarked, that the first cockade exhibited in France, even during his short absence, was green, in compliment to the colour of his livery. The name of M. Necker resounded from two hundred thousand men in the streets of Paris, whilst the object of their acclamations shunned every demonstration of enthusiasm with more care than a criminal employs to escape from the scaffold. The resolution which he had formed he did not communicate to his family, to me, or his most intimate friends.

My mother, though in delicate health, departing without a female attendant—with-

out even a travelling dress, entered, with my father, the carriage in this they usually took their evening airing, and in this they travelled day and night till they reached Basle; where, when I rejoined them four days after, they still wore the same full dress in which they had presided at the dinner party, from whence they withdrew, by stealth and in silence, from France, from their home, from their friends, from splendour, and from power. At the sight of this garb of fashion, covered with dust; at the sound of that foreign name, which had been assumed to prevent discovery and detention, I was overwhelmed with such deep emotions of awe and tenderness, that on entering (at the inn) the apartment in which I once more beheld my father, I threw myself at his feet, and thus, by an involuntary impulse, offered spontaneous homage:—this external act was but the symbol of that habitual veneration which he was formed to inspire in public and in private life, in the brilliant moment

of his political career, and in the every-day details of the domestic circle, his truth and justice, his magnanimity and benevolence, were equally conspicuous and permanent.

It is a trite remark, that no hero exists for those with whom he is perfectly familiar. Experience proves, that almost all who have performed a public part, are without the qualities essential to the private man; but when you recognize in the same individual a character at once simple and sublime; when you behold the upright citizen in the eminent statesman, the philanthropist in the man of genius, the man of feeling in the man of exalted station, the nearer you approach to such a man, the more he becomes the object of admiration; the more you discover the image of that Providence who presides over the starry heavens, yet disdains not to clothe the lilies, and to watch over the life of a single sparrow.

My father, who has often received the

tribute of praise from the pen of his wife and daughter, would have been happy to impose on us that conventional modesty which prevails in other families. But we discovered in him virtues so consistent, so uniform, so perfectly in harmony with the language which he maintained to the public, that we were compelled to relieve the full fraught heart with the expression of that domestic worship which consecrated our whole existence.—Oppressed by gratitude and affection, we learnt to despise that common-place raillery, which blunts the edge of feeling, and imperceptibly impairs the integrity of principle.

On his abrupt departure from Versailles, M. Necker had not even taken a passport, lest he should commit himself to some individual who might betray his confidence. He was careful to evade every pretext for defering his journey: but reaching Valenciennes, the commandant of the town refused him permission to proceed without a passport. My father produced the king's letter, which

he had no sooner read than the commandant, who had recognized M. Necker by his resemblance to the print, which was placed on the mantle-piece in his apartment, permitted him to proceed, not without breathing a deep sigh for the irreparable evils which he foresaw his departure must produce to France.

It had been proposed to the king to put my father under arrest, since it appeared incredible that he should take precautions to counteract the effects of that enthusiasm which he had excited; but the king, who never ceased to do justice to his probity, insisted that it would be sufficient to request him to withdraw *quietly*. The event demonstrated that his majesty did not err in this calculation.

It was in the morning of the 12th of July that I received a letter from my father, announcing his departure, and desiring me to retire to the country, lest some expression of public homage should be addressed to him through the medium of my person.

In the morning I received deputations from every quarter of the city, who addressed me in the most enthusiastic terms on the departure of M. Necker, and on the steps proper to be taken to obtain his recall.

At such a moment, I scarcely know to what conduct I might have been prompted by youth and inexperince ; but, in obedience to my father's letter, I retired to some distance from Paris, where, being apprized by a second courier of the route which he had taken, (and of which he had made a mystery in his former letter,) I set out, on the 13th of July, to rejoin him. My father had chosen Brussels, as a less distant frontier than Switzerland, and, as a further precaution, where he had less chance of being known. During the twenty-four hours that we passed together, preparing for the long journey through Germany, by which he was to return to Switzerland, he recollected that, a few days before his exile, Messrs. Hope, the bankers of Amsterdam, had asked him to

lend security, from his own fortune, of two millions, deposited in the royal treasury, for a supply of wheat, which, in this memorable year of scarcity, was become indispensable to the subsistence of Paris.

Much as the disturbances in France had shaken the credit of its government with foreign states, the personal guarantee of M. Necker was alone sufficient to inspire confidence, and he hesitated not to accede to the requisition. On his arrival at Brussels, fearing that the news of his exile might excite alarm in Messrs. Hope, and consequently impede the expected supplies, he wrote to confirm the guarantee. Banished and proscribed, he hazarded the greatest part of the property still remaining in his possession, to preserve Paris from the calamity with which it was menaced, by the inexperience or embarrassment of a new minister.—O Frenchmen! O France! it was thus that my father loved you!

When the new minister, the ephemeral

successor of M. Necker, was initiated in the business of his department, it devolved on M. du Fresne de Saint Leon, the first clerk of finance, to present, amongst the correspondence, the answer from the Hopes accepting the first security, which my father had offered them. I know not whether the successor relished this mode of serving his majesty without emolument, and even at the risk of losing his private property, but what could be more noble, more consonant to the spirit of antiquity, than the conduct of M. Necker, who, in ratifying, during his exile, the generous sacrifice, must have risen superior to the sentiment most common to mankind—that of wishing his absence should be regretted, by refusing himself the satisfaction of being compared with his successor.

My father had proceeded, with M. de Stael, to Basle, through Germany. My mother and myself, who followed leisurely, were overtaken at Frankfort by a messenger, who brought letters from the king and the

National Assembly, which, for the third time, recalled M. Necker to the ministry. It was at Frankfort that I received the intelligence of an event which apparently raised my father to the summit of human prosperity ;—at that same Frankfort to which I was recalled fourteen years after by a very different destiny.

My mother, far from being elated with this victory, was not even willing that my father should accept the triumph. It was at Basle that we rejoined him, and that he made his decision to return to Paris ;—a resolution which I am authorized to state he did not embrace without extreme reluctance. The issue of the 14th of July convinced him that he should in future have to contend for the preservation of royalty ; he foresaw, that though his popularity must be sacrificed, he might still fail to obtain that ascendancy with the government over its pernicious counsellors, which could alone save it from destruction.

At this moment he had a glimpse of futurity, which impressed him with a presage of those innumerable evils, too fatally attested by subsequent experience. These apprehensions, however, were combated by hope, and vanquished by a sense of duty. He trusted to his personal popularity to protect the partisans of the ancient régime from some of those tremendous evils with which they were menaced. He flattered himself he might prevail on the Constituent Assembly to covenant with the king for a limited monarchy; but this expectation was far from being sanguine. To himself and to us, he dissembled not the obstacles which opposed its accomplishment; but he dreaded the self-reproaches which might attend him in his retreat, if he refused to make any effort to avert those evils which he might vainly attempt to prevent.

It is easy to conceive, that to the man of genius, endowed with imagination and sensibility, the history of whose life is inter-

mingled with the most fearful political revolutions, and whose ardent spirit is corroded even in solitude by painful retrospections: neither conscience, nor reason, nor the esteem of mankind, can always prove sufficient to ensure tranquillity.

Let the envious ask for splendour, for fortune, for youth and beauty, all those smiling gifts, which serve to embellish the surface of life; but never let them cast an invidious glance on those eminent distinctions of mind and genius, which destroy the peace of their possessor. Let them rather deprecate than calumniate that perilous eminence, which finds its enemy in human destiny. Let them at least disclaim the injustice of hating those who are already the victims of persecution.

Yet, what a brilliant moment of happiness, of enjoyment, was that journey, or rather procession, from Basle to Paris, when my father decided to return to Versailles. I know not that history offers a parallel in-

stance of triumph for any man, who has not been a sovereign. The French nation, so animated in the expression of its sentiments, surrendered, for the first time, to a hope which was wholly new, and of which it had not learnt, by fatal experience, to perceive the limits: at this period, when liberty was known to the enlightened class but by the noble sentiments which it inspires, and to the people but by ideas analogous to its necessities and its sufferings, M. Necker appeared as the precursor of that long expected deity: the most lively acclamations heralded his steps; the women prostrated themselves on the ground when his carriage approached: through whatever villages we passed, the most distinguished inhabitants displaced the postilions, to lead our horses along the road. In the towns, the people insisted on drawing the carriage through the streets. A general* in the French army, the bravest of the brave,

* General Junod.

was wounded in one of these triumphal entries:—in short, no man, who has not borne a sceptre, ever appeared to be so firmly enthroned in the hearts of the people. Alas! it was I who received this homage, and who enjoyed this triumph;—it was I alone who surrendered to the intoxication of that blissful moment, and never ought I to become ungrateful for having tasted these few precious moments, however bitter should be the dregs of life.

At this period my father was occupied in allaying that effervescence of feeling so formidable to the vanquished party. On arriving at Basle, his first step was to visit Mad. de Polignac, who had always been hostile to his interests, but who, now being proscribed and unfortunate, engaged his attention.

In his journey he seized every opportunity to render essential service to the aristocrats, who were escaping in great numbers from Paris, and many of whom solicited letters from his hand to enable them to reach the

frontier in safety. This assistance he freely granted, though perfectly sensible how much he compromised his own credit by his generous conduct. It should be remarked, that my father was, both by nature and principle, endowed with a rare prudence, and that he acted not from impulse but reflection. His mind laboured under one defect, which was sometimes injurious to his capacities for active exertion—that of being susceptible of doubt and diffidence. He combined all the chances of success or defeat, and never overlooked the possibility of disappointment; but when once impressed with the conviction of an imperative duty, all the calculating powers of reason submitted to principle, that supreme arbiter of his conduct, and whatever might be the consequences of a decision which virtue dictated, in this single instance he decided without doubt or hesitation.

At every spot where my father stopt during his journey, he addressed the surrounding

people on the necessity of respecting property and persons. He demanded from those who professed so much love, to evince their sincerity by the performance of their respective duties. He accepted his triumph with a sentiment religiously consecrated to virtue, to humanity, to the public good.

What then are men if such conduct does not merit their esteem and their respect?—What then is life if such conduct is not visited by the divine benediction?

When we had advanced within about ten leagues of Paris, he heard that the Baron Besanval—one of those most obnoxious to popular fury—had been overtaken and arrested, and was about to be reconducted to Paris, where he would inevitably be massacred in the streets. In the middle of the road our carriage was stopt, and my father was requested to write to the officers who were conducting the baron to the capital, requiring them, by his own authority, to suspend the execution of the order, trans-

mitted from the Commune of Paris, and to keep their prisoner in safe custody. In exacting this requisition he took a bold step, and no one knew better than my father how fragile a thing is popular favour—a species of power which appears to be held on the condition of not using it: yet, he hesitated not to write as required, sensible that the least delay might prove fatal to the life of Baron de Besanval, and conscious that he should never obtain his own pardon, if he missed an opportunity of saving a human being from destruction. I know not what politicians may say to this respect for human life; but it appears to me, that mankind in general ought not, even from considerations of policy, to reprobate the sentiment.

On arriving at Versailles, my father was obliged to present himself before the Commune of Paris, to explain his conduct respecting M. de Besanval: my mother and myself still followed his steps: all the inhabitants of Paris were in the streets, at the windows, or on the roofs,

and all shouted *Vive M. Necker.* Amidst these acclamations my father entered the Hotel de Ville, where he pronounced a discourse, of which the sole object was to demand the pardon of M. Besanval, and a general amnesty for persons of his opinion. This address gained the hearts of his numerous audience; and a sentiment of pure enthusiasm for virtue and for goodness—a sentiment independent of political interests or opinions—took possession of the two hundred thousand Frenchmen, assembled at the Hotel de Ville and its environs.

At such a moment, who would not have loved the French nation with enthusiasm? Never has it appeared more great than on this memorable day, when it *willed* to be magnanimous;—never more amiable than at the moment when its native impetuosity was carried by an irresistible impulse to beneficence. During the fifteen years which have since elapsed, nothing has weakened the impression which that moment produced

in my mind, and which must for ever remain among the most vivid—the most delicious of my life. Through a long course of subsequent events, my father preserved for the name of France that undefinable feeling, which Frenchmen alone can understand. It is not, indeed, to be dissembled, that there have been moments of the Revolution which sully the glory of that happy France: but, richly endowed by Nature — munificently favoured by Heaven, it is impossible not to look forward to the time when she shall become worthy of all the sacrifices she has demanded, and shall recompense all the benedictions she has received.

Few women are permitted to enjoy the privilege of hearing from a whole nation the name of him who is the cherished object of their tenderness. To those privileged few I appeal, whether any moment in human existence can be compared with that which has been sanctified by the acclamations of a whole community. Those eyes which seem ani-

mated by your feelings, those countless voices which proclaim the secret aspirations of your heart, that name buoyant in air, which should seem to return to heaven, after having collected universal homage on earth—that electric impulse, which men communicate to each other—to sum up all, the inspiration of that mysterious principle, derived from nature and from society, *love;* which, whether filial or parental, is always love! and the soul sinks under emotions too powerful for its strength!

When I returned to myself I felt that I had reached the utmost limit of human felicity, yet I foresaw not that this exquisite moment of bliss was to be solitary in my existence. I suspected not that my day-star was to decline so early in its morning. My father was at the summit of human glory—a glory consecrated to his most cherished object—to humanity—to concord—to mercy: but from this day, which has been eternized by his virtues—from this glorious day commenced the decline of his destiny.

In the history of all great men there is a certain epoch of prosperity, when fortune seems to be exhausted with her efforts; but for him who had never admitted to his heart one scheme of personal aggrandizement, one wish dictated by sordid egotism, it might have been expected that fortune should be more constant. This boon was denied. Providence conducted not the French Revolution through the paths of justice; and my father, who pursued no other track, was overwhelmed in the common wreck of virtue.

On the very evening of his triumph, at the Hotel de Ville, at the instance of M. de Mirabeau, the Sections retracted the amnesty pronounced in the morning; and of this glorious day there remained to my father but the secret satisfaction of having rescued from massacre one old man, the Baron de Besanval.* Even this was worthy of any price.

* The majority of the Swiss Cantons, Berne, Soleure, &c., wrote to M. Necker, thanking him for having preserved the life of one of their citizens.

We know so little what are the torments inflicted by a cruel death, that the consciousness of having snatched from it one human being, ought for ever to be considered as an inexhaustible subject of gratitude and consolation; and is it not a triumph of humanity, when history shall attest to future ages, that one statesman has caused it to be believed, that morality, tenderness, and benevolence were not incompatible with the talents and virtues necessary to the government of a great empire? Will it not be soothing to remember, that this man at least was accessible to generosity and to mercy; and that once his influence prevailed through the wide empire of France, where, whoever suffered unjustly, might then exclaim with confidence—"If he knew this I should obtain redress; if it be possible he will administer relief." Is it not enough that we are all subject to the iron hand of destiny? And must men be equally hard and inflexible? All human beings have cause to ask compassion. For the most fortunate there is no

other perspective than old age and death. How, then, can we cease to admire in the powerful, above all other qualities, the humanity that is eager to console, the clemency that is willing to pardon!

A year of famine unexampled during a whole century, conspired with partial troubles, to render 1789-1790 afflictive. To the honor of M. Necker, Paris and the Departments were exempted from famine by his constant vigilance and unremitted care; but it must be observed, that such cares attract no homage, and are solely dictated by humanity.

Occupied with this important object, he procured supplies of wheat from every corner of the globe, frequently lamenting that he was unable to devote to politics that attention which the momentous crisis demanded. But such was his anxiety lest Paris should be left destitute of provisions at the moment when the factions were ready for open war, that he was attacked with a long and dangerous illness, which laid the foundation of that

malady which finally abridged his existence—so warmly did his heart enter into his political duties, and so tenderly did he love those whom it was his business to govern.

In revising his papers, I have found many letters addressed to him by the various communes of Paris, warm with acknowledgments for the parental care with which he had averted from them the horrors of famine. How many acknowledgments of a similar kind have been transmitted from every part of France! With what anguish have I reverted to these records of gratitude which perpetuate his glory, and ought to eternize his memory! So abrupt is the transition, so painful the reflection, that where once was renown, there is now a mournful silence; since grief has usurped the place of hope, and the blazon of pomp is exchanged for the garb of mourning! We learn to recognize death for the first time, when it falls on those we love. Hitherto, it has been but the terror of a phantom, from which our view was averted. Now it appears in open day—

it obscures the half of life: and were happiness to be born again, it would seem to wither beneath its baneful influence.

During the last fifteen months of his administration, M. Necker had constantly to maintain a struggle for the executive power, either without or within the constituent assembly.

His position every day became the more difficult, as the intemperate men who surrounded the court infused injurious suspicions of his sincerity, and he was not permitted to direct those whom he was expected to defend.

Much has been said of his want of firmness; and firmness is undoubtedly an essential quality in those who preside over a great nation: but it would not be difficult to prove, that in 1789 and 1790, such was the fermentation of the public mind, that no moral force could have arrested its violence. It is impossible to supply the want of firmness in the chief of an empire. Talents may be lent, activity borrowed, but there is something individual in the character or constitution of one mind,

which never can be transferred to another. The personal interference of the king is not necessary in the constitutional government of England; but in other European monarchies, above all at the moment of a political crisis, no minister can ever atone for the absence of energy in his sovereign, and even the public discourses which he composes for his use but serve to aggravate the contrast which exists between what he really is, and what he would appear to be.

It must be admitted, that my father, to whose nature nothing was so repugnant as the resources of corruption, could employ against the different factions no other arms than reason. But even had his conduct been regulated by other principles, I firmly believe, that, under the then existing circumstances, it was for the king alone to defend the king, and that the speeches of a minister, who was known to possess no influence at court, could not have the authority of a single word pronounced from the throne.

On the evening of that very day on which my father returned to the Hotel de Ville, M. Mirabeau and his partisans levelled all their force against his popularity. In the journals and libels printed at their instigation he was loaded with obloquy, and, in effect, a regular attack was commenced against his reputation. Who does not know that the discovery of printing has furnished a tremendous engine of power, which, when *misdirected* or *ill-regulated* must, in common with every principle of human society, tend to disorganization and destruction ?

In spite of his enemies and their persecutions, M. Necker, however, continued to dispense partial good. The remains of his popularity still enabled him to snatch some individuals from destruction. He suggested a language for the executive power, which was still supported by popular opinion, but a double virtue diminished in a two-fold degree its force. The court, perceiving the decline of his popularity, attached less importance to

his counsels, whilst the popular party, knowing that his credit was on the wane at court, no longer dreaded his influence. It was to his popularity alone that he owed his ascendancy in the cabinet; it was forfeited by his zeal in defending the throne. Had he possessed credit at court, he might have preserved or regained his influence with the popular party; and he missed this credit because he had at first maintained the rights of the people against the court. Let not the cause of morality be impugned by such a spectacle. It will appear from his works, that my father never withdrew his confidence from that virtue which had been his guide, because it had not made him triumph over his enemies. If success was the supreme object of human life, there would be no scope for virtuous effort—no aim for religious heroism; every thing must be reduced to a dull process of calculation. It is impossible not to perceive in the self-devotion imposed on delicate minds a principle which, how-

ever mysterious or immutable, must unquestionably be the agent for operating some assured and important good.

When Cato perished at Utica, though he redeemed not the liberties of Rome, he consecrated to the admiration of future ages the noble sentiments which he had illustrated by his solitary example. Who shall deny that M. Necker, in becoming a martyr to the union of civil and religious liberty, has promoted the cause of that virtue, which, to a superficial observer, might appear to suffer with him?

In 1790, that fatal epoch of his life, when he was condemned to witness the annihilation of his plans, the destruction of his hopes, the oblivion of his meritorious services, the forfeiture of that populatity and esteem which had formed his noblest recompense, even in that fatal year, he was never seduced to a deviation from upright conduct, or to a dereliction of magnanimous sentiments.

On the publication of the red book, (the contents of which should have been sacred, since they referred exclusively to the private expenditure of the king and royal family,) M. Necker became the apologist and the advocate of those who were implicated in the disclosure, although it was wholly unconnected with his own administration, and only exposed that of his adversary and predecessor, M. de Calonne. Among other secret memorandums, was an account of money transmitted to the emigrant princes of France, by whom he had been treated with marked hostility. Yet, this circumstance had no other effect than to render him more earnest in vindicating the gratuities which had been accepted by those princes of whom he spoke with that respectful tenderness, by which sympathy and commiseration are most delicately expressed:—too amiable to cherish hatred — to magnanimous to harbour suspicion, my father's soul was inaccessible to one vindictive sentiment. When the Con-

vention passed the decree for abolishing titles of nobility, M. Necker not only advised the king to refuse his sanction, but even published a remonstrance against the edict, at the moment when the enthusiasm for equality was omnipotent in France. It is foreign from my present purpose to enquire how far opinions, which by some might be stigmatized as prejudices, were consistent with the really philosophical principles which my father had ardently embraced. It would be irrelevant to point out the admirable re-union of contrasts, or rather that extent of intellect which rendered him at once the advocate for freedom and the defender of monarchy.

Whenever it shall be my business to publish my father's works, I shall annex to them a collection of all the memorials presented to the king and the National Assembly during the fifteen months of his administration. On the authority of these documents, I venture to assert, that there exists not an injustice, an abuse, or a defect incident to political

institutions, which he has not exposed, or anticipated, or for which he has not offered a caution and suggested a remedy. But this was no moment for listening to the voice of truth, when all the fiercer passions were suddenly called into action, and this fair realm of France opened to the honest enthusiast, or the mercenary speculator, the richest domain that ever tempted cupidity, or allured imagination.

My father's house having been menaced with destruction, my mother became apprehensive for his safety ; and as he had no longer a hope of being useful to his country, he departed, in 1790, having previously prepared a memorial on the depreciation of assignats, in which he announced the financial changes which have since taken place ; but, whilst he predicted with certainty the ruin impending on the creditors of the state, he left his two millions in the royal treasury, although he possessed a bond from the king which would have authorized him to reclaim them at pleasure ; and, al-

though as minister of finance, he possessed more facility than any other person for enforcing restitution. This last excess of generosity has not escaped censure, and might almost be considered as a blamable imprudence, but for the reflection that my father wished to leave to his country a pledge of his administration, and not to detach his fate from the destiny of France. It should also be observed, that although he had no other expectation than that his interest should be paid in paper money, it was repugnant to his character to admit the suspicion, that the principal of a debt so sacredly pledged, should be violated in the most perilous season of political agitation.

On his return to Switzerland, through Basle, my father was stopt at Arcy sur Aube, and menaced with destruction at Vesoul, in consequence of the popular suspicion which libellous publications had excited against him.

He was accused of having betrayed the interests of the people in favour of the emi-

grant party, who, in foreign countries, had avowed for him the most unfriendly sentiments. It was thus that he re-measured that road which, but a few months before, he had passed in triumph! Cruel vicissitude, which would have inflicted pangs on the most courageous soul, and which an unsullied conscience alone could sustain with patience and benignity.

At length he arrived at Copet, where I soon rejoined him; (fourteen years from the present moment). I found him pensive—silent—abstracted; but without any sentiment of bitterness or resentment.

One day, in speaking of the deputies from the city of Tours, who had been his inmates for some months during the Federation, he said to me—"This city testified much kindness for me a year ago: perhaps it is not quite forgotten: perhaps in that part of France I am still beloved." It is for those only who have been familiar with his countenance, who can recall the sublime expression in his

eyes, or the touching tones of his voice—it is for those alone to conceive how these words vibrated to that heart by which he was passionately adored. But it was not often that he divulged his secret emotions. Calm and collected in his deportment, on every subject in which his personal feelings were interested, he had that reserve which is the indelible character of intense sensibility.

On his arrival at Copet, that sacred spot where he still lives but in the bitter regrets which eternize his memory, he commenced that admirable life of solitude and resignation, which conciliated even the respect of his enemies. It was here that he composed, on the different political situations of France, those celebrated works which have successively obtained the approbation of men whose party was vanquished, and extorted the censure of others whose cause was victorious. It was in this retreat that he developed a celestial soul; a character which every day became more pure, more noble, more sus-

ceptible of humane and generous sentiments, and in his adversity he impressed on all who approached him a veneration which must remain till death.

In composing the political life of my father, I shall have occasion to examine the character and object of his writings. As some of these referred particularly to subjects of temporary interest, I shall, perhaps, detach from them the general ideas, to form a body of political principles which must be imperishable as his name. I am persuaded, that many, even of M. Necker's warmest admirers, will be struck with the force of his genius, when disengaged from those ephemeral events against which he had so often to exert his intellectual strength.

It will be curious to select from those political compositions, which were prompted by the exigences of the moment, ideas worthy to be presented to posterity. The only work which he published, independently of political tracts, is a series of moral and re-

ligious essays. It has by some been objected to this book, that it is divided into sections, in the manner of a scriptural discourse; but surely this form is well adapted to the nature of the work, and invests it with appropriate dignity and importance. From the introduction of the beautiful thoughts, the original and pointed expressions of the Holy Scriptures, it acquires all the eloquence of the pulpit, and is more interesting than a merely didactic composition. How many graces of style and of sentiment are contained in this work? What a profound knowledge of universal nature in all its weakness and all its strength—of that nature "at once susceptible, stormy, and impassioned," which belongs to those who, by talents, by misfortunes, or even bypassions, have been roused from the sleep of the soul—the lethargic vulgarity of mere physical existence. What sublime indulgence is here united to spotless purity: what consolation is offered for every grief—that alone excepted for which I in vain invoke his ad-

mirable genius. There exists not a social relation, a human duty, public or private, whether incident to youth or to age, to civic functions or domestic duties, for which he has not prescribed some salutary principle, or pronounced some irrevocable truth. But he is one whom the sufferer will best learn to appreciate. The more perfectly a writer understands the secret of unsophisticated and susceptible souls, the less can he be comprehended by those who depend upon external circumstances, and are conscious of no other feelings than the pains and pleasures of self-love: but I may venture to affirm, that this is one of the first books in existence for solitary thinkers, who fathom their own capacities by reflection, and rather impute blame to themselves than to mankind. What emotion is not inspired by the perusal of the discourse on Death and Immortality! He who is now no more, speaks with such animation of the grave, and regrets, by anticipation, the spring, the aspect of nature, and all those

beauties of the earth which an eternal night now conceals from his eyes. He who is no more, commiserates the sufferings of his survivors, and promises immortality — that blessed immortality, fraught with the noble hopes of seeing him again, of holding with him the most intimate communication.

Oh, my God! pardon the weakness of thy imperfect creature, if to the heart which has so deeply loved, even the beatitude of heaven is presented to the imagination in the smile of that father who shall welcome me to thy eternal mansions.

The mass of mankind reach the term of human existence without reflecting upon their end: but when some luminous genius fixes his steady gaze on that awful abyss, it appears not that he sinks into the vale of death, but rather, that he hovers over that grave which he contemplates. Such was my impression on reading these discourses in my father's presence, when we were both occupied with one thought and communed on one subject.

And is it possible that this faculty of reflection, which transported him beyond himself, should be annihilated?—No!—perish the suggestion; shame on those by whom it is supported, and who little suspect the mischiefs they would accomplish. Accustomed to see in religion but an instrument of tyranny and oppression, let them in future consider it as the last, only solace of the dejected spirit, the only anchor of the despairing soul. If they have humanity, this suggestion will induce them to leave its altar untouched, whilst they pass by to the other side.

In his moral and religious course of instruction, my father still presides over the education of my children, who, whilst they listen to his admonitions seem raised on his paternal wings to heaven. The perusal of this work is peculiarly calculated to benefit those with whom life is new, and to whom it appears invested with the brilliant visions of futurity. I scruple not to affirm, (with whatever distrust the declaration may be received,)

that when I read these discourses, when I dwell on the various passages in my father's works, which are in harmony with virtuous impulses and elevated sentiments, I am tempted to reproach myself for not having sufficiently expressed the sincere, the impassioned admiration with which I am penetrated; far from having exaggerated for effect, it is for effect alone that I suppress the praise which would be dictated by independent and impartial judgment. I am not deceived by filial tenderness. They who have long been devoted to literary pursuits, acquire, with respect to books, a sort of artist-like impartiality, wholly divested of individual interests and personal sympathies. For myself, at least, I know that it has frequently happened to me to have praised the writers by whom I had been attacked, from that disinterested love of talent which rises superior to every species of prejudice or prepossession. I demand, therefore, from those who participate not in a daughter's enthusiasm for her father, that

they will re-peruse his discourse on *Murder*, on *Indulgence*, on *Old Age*, on *Youth*, and I pledge myself that they shall not read without emotion.

There is a certain class of men who have no other pursuit than fortune or pleasure, and with whom all sentiments, all principles are considered but as stratagems of war, which are either adopted or disclaimed as they happen to promote or impede a leading object. From such men I can only expect pleasantries, more or less poignant, according to the prevailing humour of the moment; yet even to such men I would say: "If you are menaced with sufferings (of whatever nature they may be)—not the sufferings of the heart, for to them you are inaccessible, but such sufferings as old age, infirmity, ruin, disgrace, or even the mere satiety of life, against which, wealth, credit, pleasure, the very essence of vitality, can avail nothing—if to such evils you become subject, appeal to the writings of M. Necker, and you shall find in I know not

what page or volume of that man, so different from yourselves, some consolatory suggestions, or expressions of sympathy—you, too, shall have your part in his universal goodness, all withered and benumbed as you are, if there remain but one vital spark within the soul, ye shall be touched and inspired by his persuasive eloquence."

The prominent feature of all M. Necker's writings is the almost inconceivable variety of intellect which they exhibit. If Voltaire was *unique* for the versatility of his talents, M. Necker was unprecedented for the universality of his faculties. It is the re-union and harmony of contrasts that constitute in the universe, as in man, the most perfect beauty. In the writings of M. Necker you discover acuteness and solidity; gaiety and fancy; reason and feeling; energy and delicacy; precision and imagination; originality of thought and elegance of expression—all these various qualities of mind and heart exist without concomitant defects. It is always power that pre-

vails, but that never exceeds its proper limits. Guided by the spirit of analysis, which never decomposes fixed principles, and which, in striking at the cause, never chills one generous impulse, never paralyzes one warm emotion of the heart in exploring an ideal world, he appears not in opposition to experience and reason. He soars with imagination, but is never bewildered in chimeras. The legislator and the poet are united in his mind by that comprehensive grasp of intellect, which embraces every object at the same moment, and by that admirable principle of order, which never loses sight of its native greatness.

Thus the stars which roll over our heads are governed by immutable laws, and guided by undeviating calculations; although such is their immeasurable distance from our terrestrial sphere, that we perceive not the mechanism of their movements whilst we contemplate, with reverence and astonishment, their celestial course.

The posthumous works of my father which

I am about to publish, consist chiefly of detached thoughts and fragments on various subjects. Some of them were composed at different intervals, but the greater part were written during the last winter of his life. I have suppressed only such as were connected with political subjects. No production of his pen is more calculated to give a proper idea of his own character, of his proper self. To a quick insight into the human heart, he superadded, in an eminent degree, the *vis comica* which gives poignancy to his strictures on general society. The same work contains a fragment on metaphysics, a paper on the commerce of grain, and an essay on the happiness of fools. To do justice to these three subjects he must have had a mind of *extraordinary compass* (to borrow a musical expression) in *its keys*. In addition to these are some other fragments, equally distinguished by beautiful sentiments and correct elegance of composition. He proposed to enlarge these miscellanies, and had even

collected materials for the undertaking. Engaged in a political career, by which he was long confined to objects of administration, or of public utility, he had a peculiar pleasure in opening his mind to the reception of new ideas, and in directing his attention to objects from which he had hitherto been precluded. It must be a subject of regret, even to those who had no personal interest in his welfare, that his sudden death prevented him from dispensing those treasures of information which he possessed, and which are now lost to society for ever. So just and exquisite were his perceptions, there was so much of moral sensibility in his intellect, his decisions were so perfectly free from prejudice and from system—in one word, there was something so original and yet so comprehensive in the character of his mind, as is not likely to be replaced.

Almost all distinguished men are governed by their predominant mental faculty. He who is firm refers every thing to *will;* the enthusiast

attributes all to enthusiasm; the susceptible, to imagination. It required the incredible variety of which M. Necker's life had been composed, to render him capable of taking his observations from the centre of things, and of preserving with the human race a sublime impartiality. To produce such a character it was necessary that he should be able to discover in himself secret affinities with all other beings, and that, detecting whatever was evil by sagacity, and whatever was good by analogy, he might finally become an adept in the history of man.

In the familiar correspondence of my father there was not what can properly be called style, since he was too simple a character to bestow on his private letters the care and circumspection requisite to a literary composition: but whatever he had to communicate was expressed with a felicitous precision, which implied something more than mere clearness of perception, and bespoke the divine harmony of a soul whose secret aspirations were in unison with truth and virtue.

On some occasions, but they were of rare occurrence, when he had to convey admonition or reproof, whether the fault rested with a nation or an individual, whether the trespass was committed by a daughter or an adversary, he uniformly expressed himself with such propriety and delicacy as (to judge by my own feelings) were calculated to overwhelm the culprit *with self-reproach*. The truths which he forebore to proclaim were enforced by his silence; and the conscious mind suggested not only the words which he withheld, but the benefits which he scorned to recall, and the glory which he appeared to forget.

Many of my father's letters are destined for publication. Of all his correspondents I was the richest, the most partially distinguished. When we separated, he suffered not a single post to elapse, without transmitting to me some token of remembrance. Alas! I have not too many plans of occupation respecting him to persuade myself that the link of com-

munication between us is not quite broken.—I venture to cite a single passage from one of his letters which sufficiently illustrates the delicate yet dignified manner with which he referred to any personal interests.

Some peasants who had been concerned in an insurrection in the Pays de Vaud, having burnt the deeds containing the titles to seigniorial property, the government summoned the proprietors to whom this outrage had been offered, to prefer their official complaints against the rebels. "I have nothing particular to allege against them," wrote my father, "their *station considered*." How full of meaning is this simple phrase! The reproof of an upright man is conveyed with a grace and decorum which might equally serve as a lesson to the weakness of governments and the violence of subjects.

It has been objected to the style of M. Necker that it affected too much pomp, and was consequently marked by too much uniformity, a defect which, if it really exist, is surely

not to be discovered in the thoughts which I am about to publish, and which he composed at leisure, without any immediate views of publication. But it should be remembered, that in those works which my father consigned to the press, he had to consider himself in some respects as a public character, and was, therefore, tenacious of maintaining that tone of dignity which he conceived to be appropriate to a public station. It appears to me, however, impossible not to perceive, through this official dignity in the various writings of M. Necker, those different kinds of talent which are more distinctly perceived in his detached reflections. Even that keen perception of the ridiculous, evinced in his acute observations on human character, may be detected in some of his gravest political compositions. He indulged in all the variety of style compatible with the consideration exacted by his political character—a consideration never to be sacrificed by M. Necker, even for the highest literary distinction.

One of the most remarkable attributes of M. Necker's style is its perfect harmony: and such was his repugnance to a short or abrupt sentence, that he never composed a public speech without repeating it aloud in his study. It cannot be doubted that one of the greatest charms of style is comprised in harmony; such is the analogy between the physical and the moral, that all the affections of the soul produce a correspondent inflexion of voice, a certain melody of language which is in unison with its sense.

The predominant tone of my father's feelings was dignity or magnanimity; and by observing the harmony of his style we became sensible to the expression of his character. I am, however, persuaded that had he allowed himself more frequently to break the measured regularity of his periods, and to assume occasionally a familiar tone; had he even descended to his readers only to render them more sensible of his accustomed elevation, he might perhaps have inspired less respect; his style

would not have preserved such classical majesty, but to the majority of readers, the magnificent idea profusely scattered through his writings, would have been more obvious and even more attractive. It requires an effort of attention to distinguish whatever is refined, ingenious, and original in a style whose regularity is never interrupted. Had not Bossuet been unequal, his sublime passages would perhaps excite less emotion. The *continuity* of excellence in any thing of human composition can scarcely ever produce a continuity of admiration.

The harmony and magnificence which prevail in almost all M. Necker's acknowledged works, assume a totally different character in the romance which completes the present collection, and in which, surrendered without reserve to the emotions of a susceptible heart, he has resumed his native simplicity, and caught a tone of eloquence equally graceful and impassioned. The perusal of this little tale will convey the best

idea of what he was in domestic life, and of the desolation which must be felt by those who have now to learn to live without him. Eighteen months have scarcely passed since one morning, at our breakfast table, the conversation having turned on novels, I ventured to express my doubts whether he could ever write one. He replied that it was more possible to excite a lively interest by conjugal love than any other sentiment. Having mentioned an event which had recently occurred at Paris, I proposed that he should make it the basis of a novel: to this proposal he acceded, and in six weeks presented to my perusal the little work which I am now offering to the public.

At this moment, when every word finds an echo in my sorrowing heart, I receive not a stronger impression than I experienced from the first perusal. There is a certain degree of talent which is not susceptible of improvement: and when we recollect that this admirable language of love, of passion,

of sensibility, of delicacy, is the production of one who had counted seventy years, who had been occupied with great political courts, and immersed in financial calculations, when we recollect that the same name is prefixed to the *Administration of Finances* and the *Fatal Error*; that the same man, at an advanced age, suddenly develops in addition, or rather in opposition to his acknowledged talents, the graces of youth, the ardent passions of maturity, and I know not what delicacy of sentiment, which blended the freshness of first impressions with the consciousness of a long and beautiful remembrance;—when all this is recollected, it appears to me, that old age, at least that of my father, can no longer be regarded as the decline of life, but as the commencement of immortality. I can with truth affirm, that in the last years of his existence there was an almost celestial expression in his looks and his accents. It was on this renovation of strength and sensibility that I founded my hopes of his protracted

existence; and I fancied I saw a new pledge for the duration of his earthly career, when it was but an anticipation of that heaven which already began to take possession of his soul.

The unbounded admiration for M. Necker, which I have felt, or rather with which I have been imbued from the earliest period of my existence, far from being attributed to the illusions of filial tenderness, should rather be considered as authenticating the reality of his virtues. In the paternal and filial relations, a father and daughther not only become most intimately acquainted with their mutual weaknesses, but if the passions of youth should clash with the reason of age, the child has obviously an interest in detecting the foibles of the parent—not to expose them, but simply to annul that authority which impedes the accomplishment of its own wishes.

I will not dissemble, that I have sometimes been prompted by such motives to enter on a

similar examination ; and the result has been honourable to him in whom I vainly attempted to discover frailty. Never have I seen my father deceive himself, or submit to deception ;—never have I known him fix a false boundary between discretion and generosity ; — never have I found him unacquainted with the best means of attaining a determinate object ;—never has he failed to detect the truth, however artfully concealed or entangled. The conviction of his sagacity has operated on my character in a manner which could not but be disadvantageous in my intercourse with the world. Accustomed from infancy to rest in the belief, that every effort to conceal my feelings must be futile and unavailing, I have often communicated whatever I felt to people who could not, by their own sagacity, have divined my sentiments ; — to this communication I was prompted, not by frankness, but the supposition that concealment was impracticable, and that it was therefore better by anticipation to prevent them from having the advan-

tage of a discovery. To the almost preternatural sagacity of my father, I may trace an opinion with which I was long impressed, that whatever we think or do must sooner or later be divulged;—an opinion on which I have sometimes acted with a degree of culpable precipitation. To have lived with such a man as Necker was a bad preparation for the world.

It was during the last illness of my mother, and after her death, (since which ten years have elapsed,) that the character of my father in private life was most fully developed.

In the course of her long malady, he lavished on her cares, of which it is impossible, by description, to give any adequate idea. Tormented with restless nights, during the day she sometimes slept, whilst she reclined her head on her husband's shoulder; and I have often seen him several hours standing in the same position, lest he should awaken her by making the slightest movement. Nor were those cares merely such as duty dictates, but such as tenderness inspires, animated by

that sentiment of genuine love which is preserved in pure souls through all the vicissitudes of time and suffering.

It was often a solace to my mother to hear music. Every evening musicians were summoned to her chamber, and she felt that harmonious sounds might inspire those elevated thoughts which can alone give to death the character of sublime serenity. On the last day of her life, whilst wind instruments were playing in an apartment close to hers, there was something inexpressibly sombre in the contrast between the different expression of the airs and the uniform sentiment of sadness with which the approach of death filled every heart. One day, when it happened that no musicians were in attendance, at the request of my father, I sat down to the piano, and after having executed several pieces, began to sing the air of *Edipus Colonna*, by Sacchini, the words of which describe the cares of Antigone :—

She has lavished her tenderness and her cares;
Her sympathy has lent charms to my misfortunes.

My father could not listen to these words without shedding a torrent of tears. I ventured not to proceed; and for several hours after saw him at the feet of his dying wife, wholly abandoned to that powerful emotion which reduced a great man—a man occupied with important interests and fortified by sublime meditation, to the mere creature of feeling, overwhelmed with grief and inaccessible to consolation.

When my mother was no more, it was not by the ravings of despair my father demonstrated a grief which was no less permanent than his existence. He executed her last wishes with a self-possession peculiar to that deeper sensibility which concentrates all its strength in the performance of a sacred duty. Some hours after my mother's death, I entered his chamber, the windows of which opened on a magnificent view of the Alps, illumined by the morning sun:—"Perhaps her soul hovers there," exclaimed he, pointing to a slight cloud that passed over the horizon: he paused and was silent. Ah!

why was he not called to pronounce on me the same words? In his presence I should have had no fear of death, for in him were realized all my conceptions of religion—to whose sanctuary I seemed to have free access whilst he remained on earth; and now am I left solitary and desolate to complete my weary pilgrimage.

Much has been said of the solicitude expressed by my mother respecting her interment. In the course of her attendance on the hospitals, she had discovered more than one instance of premature sepulture, which made a strong impression on her imagination. She attached also the utmost importance to the idea that her ashes might be re-united to those of her adored husband, for whom her affection extended beyond the grave. There is, perhaps, nothing extraordinary in this solicitude, in a character of a contemplative cast, which, even in the midst of life, is absorbed by the gloomy images of death. Men are in general right when they

plunge into public affairs, or lose in dissipation the recollection of that mortal destiny which, to those who can be satisfied with ordinary interests and vulgar pleasures, presents the most revolting aspect. But when religion, love, and misfortune have fixed in solitude two beings united by sympathy and esteem, and approaching with equal steps towards the tomb, with such a destiny, what can be more natural than that a person of imagination and sensibility should seek to annihilate the dreary void of an eternal separation? These remarks refer to the testamentary dispositions of Mad. Necker, which were executed by her husband with strict punctuality and unlimited obedience; and never, during the ten years that he remained the guardian of her tomb, was her image banished from his memory.

I have in my possession some private papers composed immediately after her decease; in one of which he enumerates his various motives for deploring her irreparable

loss;—in another he institutes an examination of his own conduct, and anxiously asks himself in what instance he had been wanting in attention to her felicity. He recalls every possible circumstance by which he might have contributed to her happiness or misery, and appears to have become more or less tranquil as he was more or less satisfied with the result of his scrutiny. Not content with this examination of words and actions, he retires within himself: and appeals to his inmost heart to pronounce judgment on the affection he has experienced.

I challenge history or even fiction to produce a parallel instance of conjugal tenderness. All other men, in similar compositions, exhibit only a superficial sensibility;—in those of my father new faculties of feeling are developed; a love which in purity assimilates with the divine; and which, in its capacities for suffering, only appears human;—a love replete with delicacy and tenderness; guiltless of blame, yet accessible to remorse.

What happiness did not my mother possess during many revolving years! The love which withers with time and age—the love which is not consecrated by mutual sentiments of esteem, fidelity, and duty — how poor is such love compared with the attachment so long exemplified in this admirable union! In such a wedded pair there is an identity of existence and of memory which should seem to offer a guarantee for immortality. They who have dissipated their affection on various objects, know not where to reclaim them. In the moment of universal renovation, one look from heaven is sufficient to reanimate two virtuous beings, who in life participated of the same thoughts, and had a common fund of hope and fear of suffering and enjoyment. It cannot be doubted that my father preserved to his last moments the most devoted tenderness for my mother's memory; but it is a satisfaction to me to reflect, that during some years it was the privilege of myself and my children to have

almost exclusively engrossed the affections of that noble heart—as tender in its domestic sympathies, as sublime in its principles.

In one of the letters which I last year received from him, he observes, that he is convinced he is much more fitted for a private than a public station. Alive to all the domestic charities, whoever approached came within the sphere of his influence—every human affection was sacred;—every social duty had its appropriate place, and, from the first to the last, nothing was neglected.

When the French entered Switzerland, my father, who had been proscribed during the reign of terror, found himself, though a foreigner, on the list of emigrants. In this number he had been enrolled in 1793, when, by vindicating the king, he exposed to confiscation whatever property he possessed in France. Many of his friends were alarmed at the situation of M. Necker at Copet, the first frontier town which the French were to occupy. As he insisted on not removing

from the spot, we remained in our own home, committing ourselves to the mercy of the French Directory, and to the sentiments which were personally entertained by the French officers. Our confidence was not misplaced. The French generals evinced for my father the most respectful consideration, and, by the unanimous resolution of the Directory, his name was erased from the list of proscription.

There was, however, some cause for alarm at a moment when, according to law, every emigrant discovered on the territory occupied by the French troops might be condemned to death. But my father, though accustomed to exaggerate dangers to which my mother and myself were exposed, persisted in remaining at Copet; and our servants having been drawn by curiosity to the public road, we were actually left alone in our deserted chateau, at the very moment that the French were entering Switzerland.

Previous to this event, my father had been

employed in perusing his papers, carefully committing to the flames every letter, and even panegyric, which might have subjected the writer to suspicion. Of his scrupulous delicacy in whatever concerned the safety of others, I cite one instance among a thousand which are present to my recollection: — Some years before, he had received a letter from an honest citizen of Vesoul, disclaiming all participation in the injustice and ingratitude of his compatriots, and expressing, in the strongest terms, his indignation against those who could have been wanting in respect to the name of Necker. Hitherto my father had preserved this letter, as a record of guileless simplicity which softened his regrets; but, fearing lest this man should incur the ill will of his fellow-citizens, he so carefully erased the signature, that, when I discovered this letter amongst my father's papers, I was wholly unable to trace the writer's name.

Too many similar actions has he consigned

to oblivion, simply because they had escaped his own memory. A few days ago, I discovered, by accident, a new trait of delicacy, almost singular in its character. He had let a house near Copet on the ordinary terms to a family in middling circumstances. When this family quitted it, a woman of fortune asked to occupy the same house at a lower rent, and, by dint of importunity, at length carried her point; but conceiving himself bound to restore to the poorer family the excess of the rent which he had received from them during many years, my father wrote to request their acceptance of a sum equivalent to the restitution. To have offered the same sum from motives of generosity would have been an action of ordinary benevolence: it is the scrupulous integrity which renders the example almost *unique* in the annals of virtue.

In consequence of the French Revolution, and the sequestration of his property in France, M. Necker had forfeited three-fourths of his fortune. To the hour of his death a

false estimate was made of his wealth, which was measured not by his revenues but his benefactions. In dispensing his bounties he was uninfluenced by personal feelings, and often selected from those who had been inimical to his interests, the objects of his commiseration and beneficence. His liberality was free from ostentation, yet without affectation of secresy. Such was the simplicity of his character, that his virtues were perhaps comprehended only by those who sympathized in his feelings. His moral perfections, like every thing at once majestic and well-proportioned, did not immediately strike the eye. He had so much sincerity, that in studying the character of what is truly noble and good, a writer could not do better than examine the actions, the manners, and the words of M. Necker, the expressions he employed, whether decided or qualified, the accent of his voice, the language of his physiognomy, all bespoke that harmony of truth, which is rather to be felt than expressed, and which, though it may be analysed by the

critical observer, is beyond imitation without the impulse of kindred genius.

In the least, or in the greatest actions of life, my father's conduct was regulated by immutable principles; yet he had for others that indulgence which results equally from goodness, and from a knowledge of the human heart. There is an unbending rigour in conventional principles indiscriminately applied to all persons and circumstances, which influences society rather as a penal code than the decision of an enlightened judgment. That this severity is to be preferred to relaxation of principles, or corruption of manners, cannot be disputed; but it is the perfection of morality to qualify its judgments by comprehensive views of human character and human life. Genius recognises in superior faculties power and peril, and therefore subjects not all men to the same standard.

Without ever seeking for himself any pretext for extenuation, my father admitted this distinction in its full extent. He felt that,

in some respects, the man of an enlarged mind was necessarily the better man; he knew that the accumulation of ideas must have an inevitable tendency to produce expansion and greatness of soul, and that if superior men are not always perfectly moral, morality can scarcely be perfect but amongst superior men.

My father united to a predilection for persons of talent and of imagination, a perfect benevolence for ordinary men, occupied solely with habitual pursuits, but whose experience offered an accession to his stock of useful knowledge. If he sometimes hazarded pleasantry with his intimates, it was accompanied with such grace, and restrained by such delicacy, that I could class among the happiest moments of my life those in which I was myself the object of his sportive gaiety. Inveterate stupidity alone provoked his impatience. He entertained respect for those who had prosecuted with success any art or science, or useful occupation, or who had cultivated to perfection any single faculty—even the incapacity which most annoyed him he

learnt to tolerate, from a sentiment of all others omnipotent in his soul, the fear of inflicting pain.

He was eminently alive to the emotions of pity, an affection always calculated to inspire attachment, but which in a man of superior talents falls like precious dew on the dreariness and avidity of human life.

My father was at once the most imposing, yet most conciliatory of human beings ; the man before whom it had been most painful to feel the blush of shame, but at whose feet it had been least revolting to shed the tears of repentance : the man from whom I should have sought consolation, not by demonstrations of penitence, but by spontaneous and unreserved confession—by associating his image with my thoughts, and pouring my whole soul into his paternal bosom.

I do not believe that any individual ever inspired in an equal degree confidence and respect.

I have never known any who could invite

to such endearing familiary without renouncing that dignity which, whenever restraint becomes necessary, imposes silence with a single word. Often have I seen him encircled by my children, welcoming to his table their juvenile companions with an expression of benignity, at once so touching and so venerable, that even his condescension, whilst it endeared his gaiety, inspired reverence.

As he advanced in life he became subject to many infirmities, and in particular suffered from an excess of corpulence, which impeded his movements, and rendered him averse to mixing in society. He had a repugnance to becoming the object of observation, and perpetually recurred to the graces of youth. Sometimes he said to me: "I know not why humiliation should be attached to the infirmities of age, and yet I feel that I am humbled." It was perhaps owing to this little shade of weakness that he was so tenderly beloved. No other man could inspire for old age that tenderness intermin-

gled with respect which created in the heart more than filial sentiment.

It is not uncommon to meet with old men who affect the manners of youth; but there unfortunately exists in the juvenile imagination something which repels this infringement on the laws of nature; and although the young may at first applaud the efforts to assimilate to them, they have some difficulty to restrain the energetic feelings, the wild exuberance of youth.

There are other old men more respectable but not equally amiable, who place themselves in the centre of a certain rational sphere formed to exclude imagination, and with it all the indefinite gifts and attractions of the heart and mind. Such men extort respect, but repel affection; the young are over-awed by their presence, and though it were impossible but that all, sooner or later, should acquire the same disposition, this stern contempt of human vanity, like the herald of death, appals the soul that glows with hope and kindles

with ardent affection. Both these extremes had been avoided by my father, whose countenance, at once touching and serene, has left on my mind an indelible impression of virtuous age, and even disposed me to offer involuntary respect to every other man of the same venerable aspect.

It is only at this epoch of human life that the heart is divested of its habitual egotism, and the friend becomes the tutelary guardian of those he loves. Never shall I forget with what looks my father appeared to follow me, when I plunged into conversation with all the ardour and impetuosity inspired by active interests and ardent feelings. With those looks, though himself reposing on the shore, he seemed to accompany me with his vows and his benedictions, silently deploring that he could no longer protect me from the conflicting elements.

The feebleness of his frame presented a striking contrast to the strength of his understanding, the depth of his judgment, the acute

discrimination with which he appreciated the value of those intellectual treasures collected by time, by study, and experience. There was in this contrast something that cast around my father I know not what halo of futurity: and I often contemplated him with those emotions of tenderness which are awakened by the sight of a young man blasted in his first bloom, and whose hectic cheeks announce his rapid progress to an untimely grave.

In these declining years his life was obscured by a portentous cloud, and he inspired an awful presage in that heart where he was not only beloved but adored. It was impossible to doubt that my father sympathized in the sufferings of human life. He attempted not to arrest the natural course of feeling by the impertinence of ordinary maxims, and common-place counsels. He penetrated to your inmost being before he whispered consolation. He placed himself exactly in your position before he attempted to decide upon your destiny. No one more frequently than myself has had occasion to remark in him,

that ingenious benevolence with which he divined the sentiments peculiar to different circumstances, either of age or fortune, not only with impartiality, but disinterestedness. He resided in a province, which is not my native country, where the sciences are cultivated, perhaps to the disadvantage, almost to the exclusion, of literature. He was sensible to the pain I suffered from the conflict of opposing feelings, when recalled by my friends and my predominant tastes to France, yet withheld by filial affection and insuperable repugnance to the idea of renouncing, even for a short period, his society. On such occasions, it was usual for him to take my part against my censurers; he even persisted in taking it against myself. When I sometimes lamented that I could not, like him, enjoy existence in solitude, nor, like him, supply to myself the loss of that quick collision of mind, that ardent emulation of glory, which doubles life and gives new powers to genius, he encouraged my predilection

for France, still clinging with affection to the memory of the past, and fervently desiring to preserve to his descendants an attachment to his adopted country.

Little did I think at the moment of our parting, when we breathed the most tender adieu, with a delicious hope of a speedy reunion, little did I then think that we were parting for ever.

M. Mathew de Montmorenci, who, though devoted to the most exalted duties, is not indifferent to the delicate cares of friendship, M. de Montmorenci was present at that memorable moment; he witnessed the interest with which my father calculated even the most minute circumstance of my destiny; he saw him bless me; but the benediction was not ratified by heaven. During this fatal separation I was to lose my protector—my guardian—my friend—him whom I should have chosen from all mankind for the supreme, the only object of my affection, had we been permitted to be coevals, to enter

into the sphere of human existence together.

No one, like my father, could ever inspire in those around the idea of an almost supernatural protection. It was peculiar to his mind to discover resources for almost every emergency; and, by a rare union of prudence and activity, he would provide for every thing and yet compromise nothing.

During the convulsions of France, when we were even separated, I still confided in his protection, and never conceived the possibility of becoming subject to any calamity. Whilst he lived I felt assured that he would fly to my assistance. I knew that by his venerable air, his imposing eloquence, I might be redeemed from a prison. As a tutelary angel I addressed him: as such I yielded to his influence, with the unutterable conviction that it was not on me, but on him that devolved the care of my safety. I believed that even my errors were to be repaired by his assistance. So long as he lived, nothing

appeared impossible—nothing hopeless. It is only since his death that I have learnt to feel terror—that I have lost that sanguine confidence of youth which relies on obtaining every thing by its own effort. From him alone was derived my strength ;—my confidence was his support. Does this tutelary spirit still watch over my fate? Shall it dictate to me what to ask, or warn me what to shun? Shall it still guide my steps? Are those paternal wings extended to my children, whom he blessed with his dying breath? Enshrined in my heart, may I still seek him there, to invoke his aid and to receive his counsels!

In our retirement, my father allowed me the privilege of conversing with him familiarly several hours every day; and, relieved from the apprehension of being an intruder, I freely demanded his opinion on every subject. He composed at stated hours, without ever having neglected either business or friendship. If I even entered his apartment within this

interval, I perceived by a single glance that my presence gave him pleasure. Oh! for that cherished look, that paternal welcome, which it shall never more be mine to receive. I am now in the same apartment, surrounded by the objects associated with his image, my soul, my heart invoke him, and in vain! Oh! what is then the barrier that separates the living from the dead? An awful barrier, surely—or the being so good, so benevolent—the being by whom I was so tenderly beloved, in witnessing my despair—would, if he was permitted, come to to my assistance.

It has been remarked by a writer of no common talent, that there must always be some point in which two hearts do not touch, which in time would be difficult to render their union supportable; but sprung from the same blood, a daughter has, however subordinate in her character, a perfect analogy with the beloved father who formed her mind from infancy, whose sentiments she mechanically imbibed, whose opinions she implicitly

adopted, and with whom she freely participated whatever he possessed—except those sublime virtues which were incapable of participation. In losing such a father, who required only that his children should love him and be happy, the anchorage of hope is gone —the pillar of confidence crumbles to the dust: not liberty, but desolation is offered to view. It was for him, the sublime man, the exalted son of genius to charge himself with the care of my humbler destiny.

Even in what regards external circumstances I have suddenly passed from the most perfect confidence to doubt and uncertainty. There is not a single instance, whether small or great, ostensible or secret, in which I find not my loss as total as it must be irreparable.

By what efforts such privation is to be endured, I have yet to learn. I continue to exist, though none watches over my safety. I exist, though removed from that protection which rendered me interesting in my own eyes. Grief produces but grief. One day

succeeds another, and I wake but to find life more desolate—more destitute of consolation.

One of the greatest charms that I tasted in the intercourse with my father was, to perceive that he took a lively interest in real events, and was little disposed to pursue discussions on abstract questions. He had such an affluence of ideas, that it was scarcely possible to impart to him any with which he was not familiar: but as he was also an adept in the human heart, he was warmly interested in whatever developed its affections, and illustrated the history of man. Nothing was more revolting to him than commonplace metaphysics. "I would rather," said he one day to me, "listen to the good man who should describe to me the colour of the equipage he has just met in the streets, than to that Monsieur who addressed me the other day with: 'I know not whether you are of my opinion, sir, but it appears to me, that self-love is the *primum mobile* of all human actions.'" Real events, however trifling, are

less insipid and more pregnant with new ideas than common place reflections, reiterated by all, and felt by none.

Aware of my father's relish for strictures on men and manners, I was early accustomed to relate or to write to him whatever came under my observation, (when separated from each other): I still lived with him in the consciousness that I was collecting materials for some future conversations, or in the satisfaction of transmitting to him my own sources of enjoyment. He has frequently said that he wished not to see more of the world than he found in my descriptions, which afforded him amusement without fatigue. He listened with so much animation—it was so delightful to inspire him with pleasure—that I am unable to recognize myself now that the pulse of life stands still, and that I can no longer measure it with his existence. The most stupendous events pass before me like so many shadows;—his reflections, his thoughts, his sentiments no longer embody themselves

to my eyes. When we were separated, he was incessantly before me. I felt his presence not only in the events of life, but in the still more tender sympathy he lavished on my happiness, and that of my children. In my last fatal journey what did not his kindness suggest, or rather prevent, to secure my daughter and myself from what he called the dangers of our expedition. Even his letters are full of minute details, for which he sometimes offered the amiable excuse of paternal solicitude. I was perfectly aware of this angelic weakness which ever afforded me such voluptuous gratification, that when my daughter and myself, in going from Nuremberg to Berlin, were overturned in the snow, I exulted in the opportunity it afforded me of relating the adventure at Copet, and of witnessing the emotions with which he should listen to the recital of our perilous situation, and in hearing him anathematize the carelessness of my servant, and even my own temerity. It is only from a father we can receive such

proofs of affection—an aged father, who is himself detached from the realities of life. Whilst our cotemporaries are engaged in mutual conflicts, how delicious is the protection extended by our progenitors;—how disinterested the love which makes us feel every moment that we are still young and still tenderly beloved, and that we have yet a place on earth. When these too fall—when the generation that preceded our existence is passed away, we are left exposed to the arrows of death, and soon shall it be our turn to receive his behest and fill up the measure of human destiny.

In the spring of that same year I was in Germany, in the possession of happiness, having regained my former elasticity and emulation in that land of sincerity, of knowledge and enthusiasm, which deigned to distinguish the daughter of M. Necker, as if it had been to Germany alone that her father owed his fortune, or devoted his genius and his virtues.

In the many introductory letters, with which I was supplied by my father, he gave me the title of his only and cherished daughter; and to noble minds no other recommendation could be necessary to engage their suffrage in favour of her whom such a man had honoured with that tender appellation. I know not whether it was the will of Heaven that the thunder should reach me when I reposed in the bosom of happiness, and when the heart, which had been chilled by the bitter experience of ingratitude, once more expanded with hope and confidence. I was forming plans for various works, with the view of introducing into France the literature of Germany. I had been collecting notes on different subjects, which I hoped to submit to my father's judgment. I was even amusing myself with calculating by the almanack the very day fixed for my departure, whilst my father, laughing at my passion for dates, promised to quit Geneva precisely at the same hour, and to proceed in expectation of

my arrival at Copet. In the last letter I received from him are these words, which should alone inspire distrust in human destiny :—" Enjoy, my child, without anxiety, whatever pleasure you can receive from the society of Berlin, for I know not when I have experienced such sensations of health." These assurances had lulled me to a security totally foreign from my habitual temper. Seldom had I breathed so lightly, never had I been more perfectly disengaged from all the cares and solicitudes which are the precursors of grief. It was on the morning of the 18th of August that one of my friends laid on my table two letters announcing my father's illness, carefully concealing from me by what courier they had been brought, and what dreadful intelligence had been communicated. I departed instantly, unsuspicious of the deception, and till my arrival at Weimar never surmised the fatal truth that he was no more.

It is impossible to describe those inconceivable emotions which we suffer from the

death of our most intimate friend, with whom we have passed our whole life, who by the reciprocation of pain and pleasure seems identified and indissolubly united with our own existence. It is only by observing the decline of strength, the extinction of energy, that we become truly sensible to the disparity of age; but to pass from a letter full of busy plans and gay anticipations, and breathing the most tender and ardent sentiments to an eternal silence, is such a stroke of calamity as the heart wants courage to sustain, and imagination has no power to surpass.

In those terrible moments in which the whole human being is disorganised, when we are conscious of a sort of internal frenzy that rages within us, we are disposed to create systems and superstitions to renew our hopes and recall our illusions. On retracing my past life, I asked whether I had ever committed any crimes to merit such signal punishment, and had a momentary persuasion that it was impossible such a penalty was imposed.

When conviction was compelled by reason, my sufferings were such as must have extorted pity even from my most implacable enemies. But it is not to inspire pity that I write, in France more than any country this sentiment has long been exhausted. When I mention myself, it is only as an act of justice to my father, to illustrate his character by describing the impression which he produced on a heart susceptible of lively feelings—on one, who but for him could never have fathomed all the depths of life.

It is but a feeble expression to say we should prefer death to grief. Who has not experienced this impulse of desperation, even for comparatively trivial sorrows? But, to give an idea of what was peculiar in my father's character, and of his influence on the destiny of others if any one should say to me—"You shall be reduced to the most abject poverty, but your father, restored to youth, shall be the partner of your whole life"—the most delicious vision would be presented to my imagination. I should see

his active intelligence recommencing the career of fortune; his dignity sustaining my respectability; his comprehensive mind preserving me from a monotonous insipidity; whilst the devotedness of his affection should ingeniously discover or create a thousand sources of pleasure, combined with skill and enjoyed with wisdom. If another should denounce on me the calamity of blindness;—if it were predicted to me: "All this nature which smiles around you shall vanish from your eyes: you shall no longer see your *children*, but your *father* shall be your cotemporary; his arm shall be your support; you shall still listen to his voice;—your father, whose kindness was never withheld from misfortune;—your father, whose pity was inexhaustible, who possesses an inimitable talent for consolation, and the most ingenious address in rousing the dejected soul;—your father, from whom you have derived every thing in this world, shall accompany your future steps in life"—even such a destiny, were it offered to my choice,

I should not hesitate to prefer to independence, without his sympathy and support.

Whilst I possessed him, the disparity in our ages frequently disturbed my tranquillity; but were he restored to me, I would, methinks, gladly commute for it six months from every year of my existence.

Were it possible, during the existence of the beloved object, to conceive the misery into which we are plunged by his loss, how much better should we know how to contribute to his happiness; how much more should we feel the value of every hour, of every moment enjoyed in his society. In vain do we recall the memory of our former affections. It should seem that our enjoyment has borne no proportion to our sufferings, so superficial is our life that we do not half appreciate what we possess till it is wrested from our grasp. We are then haunted by the remembrance of our omissions. A momentary expression of ill-humour or bitterness, though a thousand times expiated and

pardoned, pursues the heart like a mortal enemy: at length all our thoughts become perplexed, and who knows if we shall be able to dissipate the phantoms created by despair?

My father, in the spring of that fatal year, lived at Geneva, surrounded by his friends, and amongst them his eldest brother, for whom he had uniformly cherished the most cordial esteem and affection. He was also cheared by his niece, my dearest friend, (the daughter of the celebrated physician, Mad. Necker de Saussure,) and who, like an adopted sister, supplied my place in absence.

In the narrow circle of domestic life, Mad. Necker de Saussure has acquired superior intelligence, and, in the ardent feelings of her affectionate heart, I had a guarantee for my immediate recall, whenever an alteration in the state of my father's health should alarm her solicitude. But the malady which proved mortal, equally violent and unexpected, attacked him at the moment when he seemed to have the most perfect enjoyment of life;—

when in full possession of all his moral and intellectual energies, he might have continued to illustrate his character by his writings, and to direct the destiny of my children. In a few passages written for his own private eye, I have found some passages admirably expressive of composure, of complacency, and tenderness. "This is an agreeable age for writing," he observes; "this era of three score and ten. Your mind has not lost its vigour. Envy begins to leave you in peace, and you hear, by anticipation, the silver-toned voice of fame." In another passage, he says—"You are old, yet full of life, of love for your children. Must all these energies be deposited in the bosom of death?" Alas! he regretted us, and we were unable to retain him. In one of his reflections he makes the following remark:—"When we lose a friend we are apt to think only of our own regrets; but should we not also think of the regrets which the departing friend must also suffer, in separating from those he loves?" It appears to me

that he clung to life. It is indeed impossible but that such warm affections, such happy recollections, must, in every situation, give value to existence. It is in the season of the passions, that the heart is left a prey to bitterness and despair.

Often in our familiar conversations, my father gently complained of the rapid flight of time. He once exclaimed, "Why am I not thy brother?—I should then protect thee all thy life." Methinks it must be an obtuse being whom such recollections do not instantly destroy.

It is sometimes a cruel situation to love with enthusiasm one whose years double ours—to feel the impotence of our wishes to resist that invincible necessity, which imposes an eternal separation—to be unable to tear from our own hearts that agitated life, which is as a consuming flame, and to divide it with him whom we have lost for ever!

One of the most astonishing miracles of the

moral world is that total forgetfulness of death in which we all continue to exist—that frivolity of sensation, which makes us float so lightly on the waves. I am not surprised that persons of a susceptible nature, when penetrated with this reflection, should retire to some monastic solitude, anxious to discover, in the most gloomy objects, some shade of resemblance between our early and our latter days.

We know not in youth—previous to the experience of some great calamity, we are unable to comprehend—what it is to have lost all confidence in futurity. I cannot now be separated, during a single day from the surviving objects of my affection, but that every sudden noise recalls that messenger at Berlin, who changed for ever the tenor of my destiny. From poetry and music, those inexhaustible sources of tender melancholy, I now experience only the most agonizing emotions. I can scarcely persuade myself that he is not there, and that by dint of tears I shall not

recall him to existence. And those impassioned sensibilities, once so delicious, from which I derived my enthusiasm, serve but to renew in all its violence the grief which, during the ordinary occupation of the day, had been stilled, or rather, stupefied.

There is a window in my father's study which looks upon the wood, where he had erected the tomb in which his remains were to be re-united to my mother's ashes. The same window commands a view of the avenue leading to the spot; and it was there that he was accustomed to stand after I had left him to bid me adieu, waving his handkerchief till I was no longer in sight.

On one of the evenings that we spent together in this study, during the last autumn, when we had been long engaged in the most interesting conversation, I asked *him*, who seemed to be my guarantee from every misfortune, even from that of losing him, what would become of me if ever I should be called to this severe trial? "My child,"

replied he, with a broken voice, and with an angelic expression of countenance—"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." Alas! the storm has not spared me. Deprived of one country, I return to the other—to the paternal mansion—but to find a tomb.

It is possible that I shall be blamed for having printed, amongst my father's posthumous works, some passages which contain my own eulogium; but I scruple not to avow, that I value nothing half so much as those commendations, and far from suppressing them, I am desirous to reprint, in the present collection, that note in reference to me, which is annexed to the miscellanies of my mother; and the letters in my behalf, which he addressed in the succeeding years to one of the first functionaries of the state. I should have found no enemies, I should not have been refused that benevolence to which I was entitled, had I been permitted to invest myself with this magnificent suffrage. But his memory is now my egis, and this shall yet

cover me till I descend to the tomb where we shall one day be all three united.

I shall not attempt to dispute the observation which some may be pleased to make, that we are a family who delighted to echo each other's praises. Yes—we loved;—we could not live without saying that we loved. We scorned to repel the attacks of our enemies. We forebore to direct our strength against them. To malice and persecution we opposed only those principles of which I alone remain the unfortunate but faithful depository.

My father, in one of his memorandums, writes;—"Ours is truly a *singular* family." Singular it perhaps has been, and such let it remain. Never shall the multitude pursue the path it has chosen. It will be for posterity alone to determine whether my father did right in sacrificing so much of present good for the suffrage of future ages. He admired the expression of St. Augustin, in speaking of the Divinity—"*patient because*

he is eternal." Even man, feeble as he is when he aspires to glory—to that terrestrial immortality, ought to be patient, if he would be eternal.

My father, as will appear by his *Thoughts*, was frequently occupied with the ideas of death, which he endeavoured to familiarize to his imagination: and it is probable that death would have been more frequently the subject of our private conversation, but for the disparity of age, which must have embittered our reflections. Happily, however, this expression, the disparity of age, has but a momentary, an evanescent sense; a little while, and it will be for me to suffer those mortal agonies which he has tasted. At that terrible moment he also shall appear before me; it will be in his arms that I shall breathe my last.

In one of his notes he says—"Imagine that you have seen the crowd which assists at your interment, and all is over." Had he then represented to himself the distress

which must be created by his loss—had his penetrating spirit pursued the subject in all its details, even to the sepulchre;——but passing from those gloomy ideas to that exquisite delicacy of sentiment, in which no private individual, and still less any public character, ever equalled him, he records in the next page an infantine remark of my daughter, of which the sensibility had touched him. And he subjoins, in speaking of her: "Would that some one would bring me tidings of her!" It is for me, my father, to be the first to fulfil that mission. Kindly has Providence thrown over our future paths the veil of hope. Were our eyes permitted to take a clear view of the opposite shore, who would remain on this desolate coast? Who would not be impatient to depart, and to rejoin his chosen friends?

In the progress of my father's illness he was soon in a state of delirium. Even then, when disengaged from all external objects, he evinced the elevation and the sensibility

of his soul. He incessantly mentioned religion with love and respect; he implored with fervor the indulgence and the mercy of God. What are we if such a man distrusted his acceptance? He gave his blessing to my three children;—he blessed also his daughter. Laying his hand upon his heart, he repeated many times the touching words—"She has loved me much." He was anxious for my future fate. Several times during his fever he expressed his apprehensions that his last work might have been injurious to my interests. He pitied me for losing him. Engrossed exclusively by the tender domestic affections, he retained no recollection of his arduous career, or of its splendid celebrity. The heart alone survives in those moments of depression, when vulgar men betray only egotism and vanity.

His testament commences with these words:—"I bless the Supreme Being for the lot which he has been pleased to grant me on earth; and, with firm affiance, remit to his

goodness and mercy my future destiny."—Thus, in defiance of all his various sufferings, he was satisfied with his lot; and neither assuming pride or affecting humility, he felt that it had been illustrious, and that time would consecrate it to immortality.

The last words which he uttered were addressed to the Deity. "Great God!" he exclaimed, "receive thy servant, who approaches death with hasty steps." Doubtless this petition was accepted. It was he who was protected by heaven, not his unhappy daughter, who was not even permitted to receive his last words, to sustain him in the awful conflict of nature. She even enjoyed existence at the moment that he perished.

In his discourse on charity, he has said: "How impressive, how sublime is that last moment, in which our account with this world is closed, when the virtuous man, in taking a retrospective view of his former life, may with propriety declare in the words of Job—'I relieved the destitute stranger, and

the orphan who had none to succour him. The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me ; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.' " Admirable prediction of his own end ! In the same discourse, he describes with a sagacity, which is at once ingenious and affecting, all those good offices, the dispensations which charity employs in administering relief to the suffering wretch, or proposes consolation for the afflicted soul. It is thus that he discovers the inexhaustible resources of a master mind, surrendered without reserve to the impressions of goodness and benevolence.

In one day, and by one fatal blow, the sources of pity were dried up, and the altar of magnanimity levelled to the dust. To the disinterested sufferers in the cause of liberty it had been soothing to consider the house of Necker as a sanctuary, and cheering to reflect, that in his remote dwelling, at the foot of the Alps, one great and virtuous man existed, who participated in their sacrifices, and hal-

lowed their exertions; and who, in his life and writings, continued to inspire that sacred love of truth and rectitude, that elevation of soul, and religious sympathy, which are all-sufficient to recompense pain and privation.

And all this is now over. That sanctuary is closed on earth. There is no longer a triumph for patriotism. The laurel which the suffrage of one great man conferred on a noble action is blasted. He, who in his illustrious old age, kindled, with a persuasive eloquence, in all who approached him the love of truth and justice, is now silent for ever! In the universal veneration attached to his name, the good of every country found refuge and protection. And I am not solitary in deploring a loss which leaves in society an awful void—an universal desolation.

Other men have pursued a career more brilliant—more dazzling—resplendent to the eye of ambition, and flattering to the heart, whose only aspiration is for prosperity: but never has any man of genius arisen in France

so warmly, so devotedly the friend of virtue. Never again shall such proofs be given of benevolence, of tenderness, of magnanimity, and heroic attachment. From France, from the world, this bright example is withdrawn, for mankind—as for me, this star is set for ever!

MISCELLANIES

BY

M. NECKER.

MISCELLANIES.

I. LIFE BUT AN ESSAY.

OUR opinions are subjected to so many changes, and we come and go in every direction in such a manner that, contemplating life as we look behind us, we seem to see nothing but confusion.

There are many observations to be made adapted to impress upon us the belief that the present life is but a simple essay: often, had one instant more been given us for reflection, some of our greatest faults would not have been committed, and there are symptoms of infancy to be seen even in the most mature age. Is it not also a subject

worthy of reflection to see the progress of our mental illumination continue when the passions are gone by—after the period of our life when we seem to have the least occasion for it?

II. POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Books will be written probably to the very end of the world upon political economy. It is a science in which each man wanders according to his fancy; where we always manage to proceed on our way, whatever may be the propositions with which we chance to set out. 'Tis a science in which one is led to follow, unconsciously, the opinions of others; for all the paths in it run in a circle, and we return upon our steps much more than we advance. It is not thus with geometry and the high metaphysics; with geometry because we are constrained to pass over all the discoveries of others before we can ascribe to ourselves one new idea, and with the high metaphysics because in a very short

time we arrive at the brink of infinity, of that boundary which no one can pass.

III. THE ENVIOUS MAN.

There are certain circumstances in which the envious man will applaud with much greater vehemence than any other person: this is when a speech or an action are of indisputable excellence. He hopes, that by chusing the highest tone in the testimonies of his admiration, he may silence those who do not like to be seconds in any thing; and he has besides perceived, that by carrying praises to exaggeration the fatal *but* is the sooner brought into action; and the moment this *but* makes its appearance, he thinks himself so much the more privileged to give it a gracious reception, in proportion as he has just distinguished himself by overstrained plaudits.

IV. THE UNION OF MORALS WITH POLITICS.

Tiberius had as much power as the Antonines; Louis XI. as much as Louis IX.; but

ought we to conclude from thence, as is the fashion at present, that there is no necessary point of union between morals and politics?—I am far from thinking thus. The art of making oneself obeyed, of making oneself feared, does not complete the idea that we should form of politics; that word ought also to include the art of making oneself loved, of governing without violence—the art of attracting the esteem of other nations.

You cite also the success of bad faith, the triumph of hypocrisy, and you laugh at private morals, you ridicule public virtues; but is it not an exception against the universal order of nature, a sort of blow struck at it, when vice obtains a momentary success?—There is no field of speculation for rogues but among honest men, and you cannot give currency to the policy of Machiavel without admitting the supposition that the greater number of princes obey the laws of good morals.

This may, perhaps, be a new manner of considering the union which subsists between

morals and politics; a lovely union, which has not always been properly supported, but which is not the less worthy of being so.

V. PROVERBIAL SAYINGS.

There is a fine character of truth impressed upon all notions in general currency, upon all proverbial maxims, though having become, from their antiquity, the possession of the lower classes, they have contracted a taint of vulgarity which exposes them to the contempt of men of superior taste; there is great pleasure in restoring them to the honour which is their due.

VI. MEDIOCRITY.

When Nature called you into being in a middling station of life, far from envying the great their riches or their honours, you had reason to bless your fate. In that state all your labours then become matters of interest to you; the least advance in your fortune gives you pleasure, and continuing on your course

by slow degrees, you may travel all your life along the path of hope.

VII. MEASURED STEPS.

There is not sufficient variety on the great theatre of the world to amuse a very ardent mind during a long voyage.—How is it when, under favour of a large fortune or precocity in education, the point from which we set out is placed too near to the commencement of our life—when at the first emerging from infancy strong interests or a high destiny have too soon occupied the mind? Every thing around us has been prepared for pursuing our course with measured steps, and no excess seems suited to us.

VIII. NECESSITY.

There are situations in life which, to conduce to our happiness, must have been fixed by necessity; such is mediocrity of fortune. For if you have voluntarily refused an increase of wealth or of honours, there are mo-

ments of regret in which you will be angry with yourself, and you will have a persecutor in your own imagination.

One of the most admirable features of our intellectual organization is the agreement established between two principles apparently in absolute contradiction to each other—LIBERTY and NECESSITY.

IX. MYSELF.

Myself is a forbidden subject of conversation; yet it is, perhaps, the only one which the greater part of mankind have studied well—in which they have made any discoveries. Suffer people to give you the opinion they have of themselves, and they will amuse you more than by repeating, after so many others, the common-place things of life. There is a sort of legislation in society which consists entirely of enacting restrictions, and which, giving all men thus a similar exterior, makes me almost die with *ennui*.

X. SENSIBILITY.

I do not inquire whether there is a moral aim in the novel which has made me shed so many tears, for one cannot be so much moved without being rendered better. The being thus affected disposes me to pity and compassion; it prepares me to feel the most delicate sentiments of love; it opens my heart to consolatory ideas, to the most consolatory of all, the belief in God, and it encourages me to the practice of virtue by making me satisfied with myself.

XI. PRINTING.

Thou who didst invent the art of printing give us back the money awarded thee for the discovery!—See what use has been made of your ingenious idea; sometimes it has served as a means of promoting disturbance and effervescence; sometimes, under favour of the privilege which authority has reserved to itself, an assistant to despotism—a veil to hypocrisy.

XII. NEWSPAPER-WRITERS.

You wish to see such an author, such a sect, such a government, such a nation decried, and the newspaper-writer obeys. Is this an honourable function?—No, surely; but the public has not yet taken up the thing in a serious point of view.—There is a chance in every thing.

XIII. THE IMAGINATION.

The imagination in its mysterious action seems to terminate in a point so fine, so subtile, that a nothing almost may then bend it. For this reason it is that we have so often seen, not only a man of moderate capacity, but even a fool with one or two gross ideas, domineer over a man of genius, whose multifarious perceptions were a general subject of astonishment, and who seemed, from the extent and variety of his talents, to touch on every thing!

XIV. BOASTING.

What a person says at every moment of his own talents and his own character is commonly the very opposite to the truth: what he is naturally he suffers to take its course without thinking of it: he is intent only upon what he wishes to appear.

XV. EXPRESSIONS OF HABIT.

One may form a tolerably just idea of the principal features of a man's character, by only remarking any term which he uses habitually. *Honestly* is a word commonly in frequent use by a notorious dissembler: a very formal man will have *without ceremony* for ever in his mouth; while the flatterer will be equally ready with his *you may believe me.* The man of confused ideas will say, *let us speak clearly;* the caviller, *what does that signify?* One might amuse oneself much with collecting a variety of these examples. I knew a man, a terribly long

speechifyer, who was perpetually saying *in short*, introducing it even in his very first phrase. The common class of people have a vast number of these *by-words*, which in them is merely the effect of habit, having caught them up they know not how. The habit of using them is, however, so strong, that though assured 'tis for their interest to abandon them they cannot do it. A designation of this kind would be more important in the tracing out any person than a description of their features.

XVI. EAGER CURIOSITY.

The man of eager curiosity always says *what?* to every thing he hears; he wishes to engage the relater to repeat his story.

XVII. LISTLESSNESS.

See there Alcidon.—He has discovered that notwithstanding all his graces he is very *ennuyeux* to the company.—What does he do?—He goes up to the chimney in the midst

of a very large circle, extends his arms, stretches his legs, and yawns with a great noise, doing all he can to acquire himself the reputation of a man entirely exhausted.

XVIII. THE VAIN MAN.

They talk much of the beggars who shrink from their vocation.—There are vain men—men of great pretensions, who are pretty much in the same state. They are so afraid of appearing to solicit our voices in their favour, that they never half finish a sentence, and sometimes yawn at what they say themselves.

XIX. THE MYSTERIOUS MAN.

The first law which a man imposes upon himself in diplomacy is to be mysterious. This is wrong, for such a character banishes confidence in others. There are two ways of being secret: one by thinking always of what is proper to be said; the other, of thinking always what ought to be concealed: the first is adopted by men of moderate talents; the

second, by those of superior ones. Complete success is never attained but by the latter; it is the only thing that gives assurance to the mind, and consequent ease to the manners.

The Baron de ***, the minister of a great potentate, shewed the greatest reserve towards those with whom he was to be engaged in matters of business, and hence made it manifest that he was endeavouring to confer the character of a dupe liberally around him. Every one excused himself from accepting this character, and he could get nothing from them; his correspondence with his government became sterile, and he was recalled.

XX. OLD MEN.

Old men lead a very painful life while they are still in a state to feel every thing, to appreciate every thing. The smiling prospect of the future is their's no longer, and when they would talk of the past no one will listen to them. Every one dashes into the scuffles of the world, runs towards the field of battle

whence they are returned, 'tis much if they condescend to salute them as they pass.

XXI. INDECISION.

The dangers of indecision are obvious to all, but few people attend to the kind of mania which often accompanies this character. I will notice some of the principal forms in which it appears. The man who is a prey to the torments of indecision will quarrel with his own reason, which does not know how to conduct him with a steady hand. He creates himself a new legislator, he gives himself another master, to whom he submits blindly. This master, this legislator, is nothing, however, but a simple rule, a capricious rule; but which has the merit of being clear and decisive. By this rule, which differs according to the nature of things, the man of indecision is determined in his labours, in his walks, in his choice of the books he shall read, in all the details of his life. Is a month, a week, a day, to be fixed for a certain journey he is to take,

for something to be done, no matter what, the decision is made by consulting the almanack on certain festivals, certain particular epochs, or on the change of the moon. Undoubtedly, some act of the will was requisite on the part of the indecisive man to establish these rules; but that once accomplished, he has ever after nothing to do but to obey. And what a blessing, what a convenience to him! He is released on a sudden from all the pains, all the troubles to which his character subjected him at every instant. It is true, that this regulation leads sometimes to very odd sallies, since one simple and positive rule, such as must be established to keep off irresolution entirely, never can suit all circumstances equally well. This the man of indecision himself perceives, but in grateful remembrance of the many services which the regulation has rendered him, and the comfort he still receives from it, he continues his submission, refusing even to yield to the exceptions which his own reason counsels. Strange

singularity!—'tis in sight of this reason, and with its knowledge, that he is guilty of a great folly.

Scarcely will any one admit the truth of a manner of being so strange, because it has an air of madness; yet a variety of observations have convinced me that, under different shadings, it is very common. I have seen my daughter attacked with this mania, though nobody is more susceptible of being hastily led away, or more prone to act without reflection. But in situations of perfect calm, in petty details, she does not know how to come to a resolution; and it is a curious spectacle to see a person whose imagination soars above all common ideas, seeking at every moment a rule by which to decide how she shall employ herself this or that hour—a law by which the portions of the day shall be thus or thus allotted—a motive of preference for such or such a day to quit a place, for such an epoch to undertake a journey, or any other project she has in view;—in fine, it is a curious thing

when she is writing, when her looks, full of fire, express the warmest enthusiasm, to see her, nevertheless, surrounded with whatever may assist in fixing her indecision, to see the watch opened, and the almanck spread out before her.—What a mystery is the human mind!

XXII. THE SHIFTS OF IGNORANCE IN PLACES OF IMPORTANCE.

The conduct of a man in public life, occupied in concealing his ignorance, is an absolute system of tactics. It is curious to remark his studied silence when the conversation turns upon a subject which he is conscious he ought to know well, and of which he is equally conscious that he knows nothing;—to see how he slinks away when this conversation approaches too near him, and the looks of the circle around seem to express that they are all expectation to hear his opinion. He goes up in an absent way to the chimney-piece, takes up some papers that lie

there, and begins to look them over with profound attention, while, nevertheless, if he hears any thing said on which he may venture with confidence to put in a word, *'tis so*, says he, *exactly so*, not taking his eyes, however, from the papers, till the moment when he can adroitly give another turn to the conversation ;—and to this resource he has been obliged to recur so often that it is become entirely familiar to him.

Sometimes he will be a little more adventurous, and if a debate arises in his company upon the period when some event of antiquity happened, or upon the distance between two large towns, and several different opinions on the question are supported with equal pertinacity, one maintaining, for instance, that it was the year 300 before our æra, another, that it was the year 200—one that the distance between the towns was two thousand leagues, another, that it was two thousand four hundred, he will fix the period at the year 250, the distance at two thousand

two hundred leagues: this is a medium he ventures to take without having any notion whatever upon the subject, only he feels confident that he cannot be very wide of the mark. But with such fortunate opportunities to display his knowledge he is not often favoured. It is more easy to him to terminate a controversy upon any anxiom laid down, since he has always some common-place remark or assertion ready at hand, suited to the occasion. Sometimes he takes his revenge; and if he happens to have been reading in the morning, in the way of his business, any paper or papers, through which he has acquired some piece of statistical knowledge, he does not rest till he gives the conversation such a turn as will enable him to bring it out. Woe, then, to any one who thinks that he shall pay his court to him by making many inquiries upon the subject, or who offers some slight objection, that he may ask for an explanation ;—our man of ignorance is already at the full length of his tether, he answers only

by monosyllables, and becomes evidently out of humour.

XXIII. CONSIDERATION.

To be held in *consideration* is a term the sense of which has not the same extent under different kinds of government. Republicans commonly define riches, talents, virtue, as giving consideration ; aristocrats consider it as only acquired by birth and honours ; while in monarchies, where these elementary principles of consideration are not wholly rejected, others are equally contended for, less decided, less positively defined, but to which all homage is exacted not less rigorously. 'Tis the attribute of republics to attach all ideas of superiority to personal qualities or actual circumstances—nothing indeterminate can pass current with them ; whereas, in monarchies, the vague predominates in the scale by which superiority is measured. There nothing is determined, nothing ought to be so, except the supremacy of the chief ruler ; a sort of per

petual negotiation upon the subject is maintained among the inferior ranks. Here it is that the whole value of *consideration* is perfectly understood; of that singular kind of distinction which is independent of the favour of the prince, and which is conferred by opinion alone. Never was *consideration* so much sought after as in the reigns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI.; for opinion was then strong and the monarchs weak. Society had erected a tribunal more formidable than that of the prince; and the courtiers, nay, the ministers themselves, would rather have risked incurring the displeasure of the royal family, than exposing themselves to be ill-received in the drawing-rooms of Paris. This thirst of consideration was, I am inclined to think, carried too far, since it deterred the government from employing early enough the means which circumstances required. Two favourable epochs might be named for having placed it under due controul; the one in the time of Richelieu when the authority of public opinion was

not fully established, the other, when, by the events of the Revolution, it was wholly destroyed.

When in the latter times of the monarchy they talked of men and women who enjoyed high personal consideration, the number of them was very small; at least of such as enjoyed it beyond all dispute; for it did not belong by right, as I have said, to any of the advantages which we appreciate the most highly; riches, birth, and other factitious claims became means of obtaining it, if the individuals knew how to conduct themselves with the proper dignity.

I have known personally, and very well, some of those who enjoyed the highest consideration in France, which they had obtained less by the superiority of their situation in the world, than by an union of qualities, each in perfect accordance with the other. A habitual decorum in their conduct and conversation, composure in their manner, taste in their politeness, a sort of reserve which si-

lenced familiarity. All this exterior, however, was presumed to be the index to real merit, or the subject would have been considered only as a hero of the stage.

It was necessary, also, in order to obtain consideration, that all exaggerated ideas, all overstrained sentiments should be avoided; these are voyages to distant countries, which are not undertaken when the fortune is made. The more the powers appeared concentrated by reason, the greater was the respect shewn.

Above all things, a high consideration is irreconcilable with that constant and restless seeking for applause not unfrequently to be seen—with those vain pretensions, which place our fate entirely in the hands of others. We ought, nevertheless, to feel our own powers, and to let others see that we do feel them; we ought, in some sort, to be witnesses for ourselves, but to be so under proper restraints. Our opinion of ourselves cannot be without its value, since we know ourselves better than we can be known by

others; by too much modesty we expose ourselves to be under-rated, and this is never the way to obtain consideration.

It may seem strange to say, but this consideration, the result of such varied merit, never can be attached to any one, whether man or woman, with a mean countenance and person. 'Tis, that consideration implies respect, and respect must be *commanded* rather than *granted.*

Esteem has often been put on a parallel with consideration;—there is more solidity in the one, more pomp in the other. Every thing is pure in esteem, and yet consideration is more flattering. A simple and religious mind is satisfied with esteem, but consideration is required when we are wholly among the world and emulous of the homage of mankind.

XXIV. HEREDITARY MONARCHY.

There are in the social world many institutions, which, received as simple things, are

nevertheless the result of a long series of ideas, more or less metaphysical. How many ideas of this kind have preceded the very common terms *public order*, *liberty*, *political power*, the word *king*, or sole chief of a great state;—and how many ideas of this kind have in the same manner preceded the singular term of hereditary authority.

The common class see nothing in a hereditary throne but a patrimonial arrangement, like all those civil institutions which regulate the succession of property in private families. The difference is, however, very great—it is so in principle, it is so in fact. There is no man whose powers are not equal to the possession of a field, and to tracing a furrow in it, but the government of an empire is attended with much greater difficulties. Thus, to let the administration of a mighty state be transmitted from one to another in regular succession, after a certain scale of genealogical combinations and the ordinary laws of descent, is an arrangement in the political world which must have excited great astonishment at the

first glance. To push the matter still further, and see, by the same title, the government of a great state pass from the hands of a man of talent and genius, into those of one devoid of intellect or steadiness of character, is an anomaly yet more extraordinary. How then came hereditary succession to the throne ever to be thought of?—The question cannot be resolved by shewing the inconveniences attached to other modes of succession, and thence pronouncing that hereditary descent is exceedingly to be preferred, over any mode of election that can be invented. This observation may seem to favour hereditary descent; but one single act of reasoning is not sufficient to justify any law. We must then seek elsewhere for a justification of hereditary authority.

It is easy to see how this authority has been maintained among nations subjected to a despotic government; the successor, indicated by law, immediately seizes on the military command, he makes his janissaries and his spahis take the oath to him, and, to pre-

vent their bringing his power into any parallel with his person, he hides himself closely within the walls of his seraglio; terror finishes the work and he reigns.

In Europe hereditary authority is supported after a milder fashion; in securing the continuity of respect by a singular medium. The throne is surrounded by a class of men reputed the first in the state, and who, taken collectively, have always the same appearance from age to age. These men, designated under the title of the *great lords of the court*, accustom the nation to the idea of rank, and constantly recall it to their minds. They prevent the people approaching near enough to the throne to think of becoming judges of the prince personally, of pretending to appreciate him. They prevent the emblem of royalty from being confounded with the individual, which might, perhaps, end in the monarch's being expected to be a hero, as the price of the honours paid him;—for, were such conditions required, hereditary

authority could not be maintained, unless the family could insure the privilege of producing a constant succession of men of superior powers.

Thus the *great lords* in a monarchy, which serve as an appendage to the royal family, secure a continued respect for the throne; a continued respect to a succession of princes unequal in talents and in merit; for such an inequality is the inevitable result of the chances of nature.

Some men have appeared here and there, in the march of ages, who, endowed with extraordinary powers, and assisted by circumstances, have overswayed public opinion, and given it a direction entirely after their own will; but princes who come into the possession of authority by a regular succession, by hereditary right, are men of the ordinary stamp; and if they are not to be supported by the Asiatic despotism, that public opinion must be secured to them, the utility of which the European nations know by long expe-

rience: that public opinion which is derived from the magic of ranks and dignities, mild in its influence, and which, addressing itself to our imaginations, does not uphold its dominion by fear, but simply by habit.

XXV. PATRIOTISM.

When a country is extended every day by conquests, or by new affiliations, patriotism is no longer any thing more than a word in the dictionary. There must be some circumscribed bounds, some certain limits to make our individuality, as a country, felt, and to enable us to compare it with others. The ocean which prescribes limits to Great Britain is one of the first safe-guards of British patriotism. The Americans have found the only means of conciliating a vast extent of territory with love of the country, the Federative government. Each state has remained small individually, little in its peculiar and daily interests; and if their attention rests upon the universality of the states, and

their great political union, it is as one state thinks of finding, in a firm alliance with another, the surest means of its own support and defence.

There is another origin for love of the country, which is the association of the citizens to the spiritual life of the state;—and to this term *spiritual life* I affix the same signification as belongs to it, when applied to an individual. We are ourselves either an insulated or collective character only, by thought, by choice, and by will. Thus, in a country where the citizens are excluded from every kind of political interest, patriotism is but an empty name. Do you think that this feeling has really a place in your bosom because you say you love your country; because you say you are sensible of all the advantages it enjoys?—All this may be said, may be thought with perfect frigidity, but the true lover of his country would almost weep with affection but to hear it named. I have observed the English very closely with

this idea in view; the feeling that they are English is never absent from their minds:—I doubt whether over all the vast continent of the ancient Germans, any man ever thinks once in the day that he is a German.

XXVI. A JEALOUS GOD.

The sovereign benefactor of mankind cannot be a jealous God, since he has introduced into the world a sentiment more powerful than gratitude—that is *love*.

XXVII. THE JUDGMENTS WE FORM OF OURSELVES.

Men who have a perfectly good opinion of themselves are ridiculous but happy: men who are always finding fault with themselves are unhappy but estimable. It is difficult to observe a just medium: we should contemplate ourselves at a distance without love, without asperity, merely as a common acquaintance.

XXVIII. THE PROTESTANT WORSHIP.

The Catholic worship consisting of a great many ceremonies, of a great deal of outward pomp and show, oratory is not of such essential importance there as in the reformed church. This is an advantage at a period when the offices of the church are no longer consigned to men of the first education. We see at Geneva the names of some of the most illustrious families among the list of persons who have been the greatest ornaments of the pulpit; but such persons will no longer enter into the ministry, since the ecclesiastical state has ceased to be regarded with the high consideration it formerly enjoyed. It is much to be lamented that this decline of a state so important, is a daily increasing evil, and that at a time when religion has more occasion than ever for able defenders and supporters. Even so lately as the middle of the last century, there were, at Geneva, on an average, thirty scholars entered every year as students

in theology; at present there are not more than eight or ten, and scarcely one of these is an ancient Genevese.

I have so often spoken in my writings of religion and its vast importance, that no new reflections upon this great subject can be expected from me; but I must take a survey of it under a particular point of view.

It would be very difficult for a long time, if it could ever be accomplished, to bring back, into the career of the ministry, men of talents and distinction proportioned to the majesty of their functions. When a task, then, is beyond the powers of the men who are called upon to execute it, would it not be both wise and proper to lessen it?—I think it would; and this observation I must apply to our protestant ministers. A new sermon every week, with very little exception, is expected from them; this is too much for the greater part. What sort of a composition can they be supposed to produce in so short a time, and repeated, not now and then only, but every week: and

they are, moreover, expected to learn it by heart. This latter duty has, indeed, of late, been much dispensed with, and, in my opinion, it is so much the worse. All action in the delivery is by this means precluded, and thus one great resource for producing a powerful effect upon the congregation is lost. Nothing remains but a working of the head up and down like a Chinese pagod, to catch a phrase which is given with a loud voice, and then the head goes down again to look for another. How is the preacher, thus circumstanced, ever to raise his eyes to heaven, or to turn them towards his auditors; they can never quit, for more than an instant at a time, the manuscript spread before him on the desk.

It would be something, if the preacher would avail himself of this mode of delivering his sermons, to read over some of the fine discourses which are to be found in print, and which have such an established reputation; but this will not do, his congregation require a new composition. It must, moreover, be ac-

knowledged that for the most part these discourses are extremely poor, no less as to the matter than the delivery. Of this I have had considerable means of judging in quality of lord of my village ; it is impossible not to be struck with the tranquil monotony in which the whole service is performed, and the general propensity to sleep which this produces. How can it be otherwise if there is nothing in the orator to attract attention ; if he never appears elevated by any thought, or melted by any sentiment ; if no tear ever falls upon his cheek, and if in his descriptions he gets to the brink of the lake of fire with an air of calmness and serenity suited to nothing but a scene of the most perfect stillness and tranquillity ?

In expecting that every thing should be done, every thing accomplished by the talents of the preacher, our time would be lost and we should fall into a great error ; the men of which we form an idea, which it would be desirable to find, exist not in sufficient num-

bers upon the earth, much less are they to be found in the narrow circle where we are obliged to seek them, and whence alone we can take them. Nothing then remains but, in contenting ourselves with what we have, to lighten their task, and reduce it to a proper level with their powers.

XXIX. AN ILLUSTRIOUS VICTIM.

Oh Louis! excellent prince, and the best of men, never shall any thing come from my pen in which I, as an evidence worthy of credit, do not bear testimony to thy virtues, in which I do not appeal in thy defence to the only stable judgment, the judgment of posterity.—Innocent victim! if ever there was one—innocent victim of human passions! —What an impious sacrifice!

XXX. MEMOIRS OF ONE'S OWN LIFE.

A man ought to have been very much distinguished in war or in public business to be authorized to publish *memoirs of his life*. It may also be allowed to a person possessing

eminent talents in writing to speak of himself, but any other subject would become him much better.

XXXI. KNOWLEDGE OF MANKIND.

We cannot know mankind, we cannot be sure that we have arrived at a knowledge of them, if we have not passed through three states of life differing widely from each other. A state of inferiority which imposes on us the necessity of studying others and endeavouring to please them ;—a state of equality which affords an opportunity of contemplating them in the full range of their passions ; and a state of superiority which gives occasion to observe them in all the wariness of circumspection, in their sounding how far they may go, and all their little incidental manœuvres.

XXXII. CONSOLATION.

To *console*, *consolation*, a *conseler*—fine words, and worthy to express the sweetest, the most amiable of sentiments !—Happy he

who has been able in the course of his life to say, *he is coming*, *he will console me* ;—happy also he who has spread a calm over a heart torn by agitation. Let us admire this celestial intercourse between the comforter and the afflicted person.—How ?—we have then been able to soothe the grief of a friend, to speak to him in a language perfectly adapted to the uneasiness of his mind, to the disquietudes of his imagination, to the afflictions of his conscience.—Almighty Father ! let us believe that among mortal beings 'tis the comforter, the good, the intelligent comforter, the comforter of sensibility, who is the most acceptable to thee—the being who approaches the nearest to bearing some likeness to thyself.

XXXIII. THE FEEBLE MAN.

It is not from gaiety or from folly that many people never give their opinions without their being accompanied by a laugh. It is that, being feeble and timid, they are afraid of being obliged to defend them. Their mis-

placed laugh then affords them a sort of retreat of which they will avail themselves at all hazards.

XXXIV. ESPRIT DE FAMILLE.

Little federations in the midst of universal society—this is what we are presented with on all sides in the moral and physical world. —It is the grand system of nature, the seal of order never to be altered. The *esprit de famille* is then a primary idea.

XXXV. FALSE CALCULATIONS.

I would fain prove to him that he is in the wrong and that I am in the right.—You are going to give yourself a great deal of trouble to be less loved.

XXXVI. CROSS ACCIDENTS.

One means of learning to support the greater part of the cross accidents that we meet with in the world is to think that some real misfortune has perhaps been prevented by the accident of which we complain.

XXXVII. THE HAPPINESS OF FOOLS.*

To be happy we must be fools. This moral truth is one of the most ancient in the world.

We read in the Book of Genesis, that "*when Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked.*" This signifies that they were all on a sudden enlightened as to the littleness and misery of man. "*But before God drove them from the Garden of Eden, he made them cloaks of skins and clothed them.*"

What an ever-memorable instance of his compassion towards mankind. This precious garment, this cloak of skin which covers our nakedness, is the pleasing errors we entertain of ourselves, the sweet confidence we place in ourselves, the good opinion in which we

* This is the only article in the present work which is already before the world, and is one of the first composed by M. Necker. But since his own intention was to publish it with the rest of the pieces which compose this volume it is here inserted.—*Note by Madame de Stael.*

hold ourselves. Happy gifts, to which our corruption has given the name of follies, and which our ingratitude seeks to disclaim, but which are, let it not be doubted, the great guarantees of our happiness on earth.

Since men were first united in society, a perpetual competition has been established among them, the great source of their pains and pleasures. This competition varies in its objects and differs in its extent. Some transport themselves to the extremity of the earth, and to the most remote ages, to measure themselves against all the great men who exist or have existed. Others take their measurements only from the little coterie in which they themselves move; others are satisfied with merely proving that they have more good sense than their wives or children;—all, however, find some subject of comparison.

Amid this general contention, who among all the athletæ is the most sure of conquering?—Undoubtedly the fool in his cloak of

skin—he is my hero. What signifies to him whether others would raise him up or pull him down? he carries his own pedestal about with him. Yes, his own opinion is all-sufficient to his happiness, it is an enchanted bed of down on which he reposes voluptuously, and sleeps in a state of delight.

Ah! how is it possible to paint in too high colours the felicity of such a man?—See there Clito, Chrysippus, Alcindas.—Incessantly occupied with themselves, the satisfaction they have in it sparkles in their eyes. One manifests it boldly and openly; another suffers it to break forth with some management, he counts out his treasures slowly; another restrains it under a veil of tranquil composure, he is the true *gourmand*, he adds to the delight of his other rare endowments that of a sentiment of heroic moderation.

What a charming thing is a fool absolutely gorged with himself!—He is always putting forth some exquisite oddity; in effect he must necessarily be original, since he is solely

occupied with an object of whom nobody else ever thinks.

The fool and the man of genius are the great ornaments of the world; all the intermediary classes are devoid of life and spirit; they are arid plains between two picturesque mountains. If, however, they figure equally upon the earth, their happiness is very disproportionate. The man of genius and penetration in seeing all the relations that objects bear to one another, reunites a thousand, apparently different, under one general principle. To him the picture of the world contracts itself, and its colours approach each other; scarcely in the midst of his career, he finds analogies in every thing, and nothing any longer excites his curiosity. The fool, whom all these relations escape, at the end of a life extended to two centuries, without ever having quitted his own town, would still find constant matter to astonish him. As he has no notion of classing his ideas, as he never generalizes any, every thing in the universe is to

him detached, every thing excites his wonder, every thing is a phænomenon; his life is but a prolonged infancy, nature to him always preserves its freshness.

In the eyes of the man of observation the future soon appears nothing but the probable reproduction of the past, and he looks forward to it without pleasure;—to the fool it is a new creation, and the charm of hope embellishes all his days. The man who reflects, and whose reflections embrace a thousand different combinations, if he must choose, if he must make some decision, finds an infinite number of different and contrary motives crowd upon his thoughts, and the whole activity of his mind can scarcely suffice to run over the multiplicity of his perceptions;—he is undecided, he is tormented. The fool makes his choice in an instant, he has no comparisons to make: his eye is an officious glass, which never presents more than one or two objects at a time to his thoughts.

Another misfortune of persons of talent,

unknown to fools, is the difficulty they find to make people comprehend their meaning rightly; their reason is a sixth sense, the effects of which they endeavour in vain to explain. Deceived by seeing the human figure, they make incredible efforts to transmit their ideas to others; and if they do not arrive at length, through experience, at seeing in the greater part of mankind nothing more than an image or a puppet, they must pass their lives in the torments of the Danaïdes.

If, fatigued with external objects, the man of genius turns inwardly upon himself, he finds himself so defective in a thousand ways, that it interrupts his enjoyment of what he really does possess; he is never satisfied with himself. These are pains unknown to the fool; if he engages in a survey of his internal self he finds in abundance wherewithal to excite his respect and admiration; his mind is an affectionate host always courteous to him, always polite, always ready to treat and feast him.

To the enlightened man, perfection is a towering rock, the summit of which is lost in the clouds: to fools it is a perfect globe which turns incessantly upon itself, each one believes himself upon the summit, and thinks he marches over the heads of all his fellow-beings. No, nothing can interrupt the serenity of a fool, he knows neither envy nor jealousy; as he rests his glory upon *nothings*, he finds a place for them every where.

Damon, at thirty years of age become a counsellor, arranges his hair to go and sit in judgment. He sits there in effect, and reflecting upon the respect with which he must be contemplated by all around him, he arrays himself in a most majestic gravity. But 'tis with difficulty he can support it if, by chance, a curl in the wig of one of his brethren should happen to wander from its right place, if a child should fall down, if a butterfly should burn its wings in the candle; all these things awaken in him so vast an idea of his own superiority, that he has an almost irresistible

inclination to laugh. Then, if he is to speak, his gravity incurs a new danger, for he cannot get calmly over a possessive pronoun. If an unfortunate *I*, *me*, *my*, crosses his way, the charming image presented tickles his fancy so deliciously that his drawn up features expand in spite of himself, and his countenance yields to the delight of his heart.

See two fools in conversation together: they do not hear each other, yet they laugh continually; while one speaks, the other is at a point where he is lost in enchantment, 'tis between what he has just said, and what he is about to say. They promise at parting to meet again very soon and enjoy each other's conversation, and each is fully persuaded that he has delighted his friend by his brilliant sallies.

'Tis often with the utmost diffidence that the man of talents ventures to say any thing witty or ingenious. The delicacy of his taste renders him difficult to be pleased, he has observed all the windings, the delusions of

amour propre, he has remarked that the greater part of mankind are not disposed to allow wit or genius in another, but inasmuch as that *other* has the air of not being conscious himself that he has said what, in the familiar phrase of the world, is termed *a good thing*, but leaves to his auditors the honour of the discovery to console them for his triumph.

The fool is spared the trouble and perplexity of this kind of management. He distributes his ideas around him with the most complete confidence, and if he does but now and then hit upon some common-place reflection, he makes it known by sound of trumpet; he precedes it by putting on an air of profound art, and with vain-glory seems to transport himself some paces from himself, the better to contemplate the object of his profound admiration, then he approaches himself again, the better to hear what is coming, and in this delightful occupation, agitated by a most happy intoxication, he is proud of the tributes he has been paying to himself.

The man of talents, finally, if in love, is never satisfied. The delicacy of his tact is an obstacle to his happiness; a word which escapes from his mistress, a look which he happens to catch, a tone of voice on which he puts his own interpretation, a thousand shadings imperceptible to others are sufficient to disturb his fairest hopes. Though enjoying numberless proofs of the most tender love, still he is pursued by these doubts, his heart is tormented by the most refined distinctions, he questions whether 'tis himself that is beloved, or whether he may not be loved only because he loves, not from a charm irresistible, invincible; he analyses love, and in that analysis loses all its sweets.

The fool enjoys those sweets without being beloved. He is satisfied that he makes the same deep impression upon every woman he sees that he makes upon himself. He fancies himself beloved because he is convinced that he is amiable, and he is convinced that he is amiable because he is a fool; it is upon this

base, one which cannot be shaken, that his happiness is raised. The fool was ever a happy lover, a tranquil husband; and, since nothing goes wrong with him, should his wife happen to amuse herself with any little infidelity, he is too well satisfied with himself ever to suppose that possible, and he is still tranquil, still happy. Even if at the dawn of day he should see a man quit the apartment of his wife, he runs in, hastens to her casket of jewels, looks them over, finds all safe, and laughs and chuckles that the stupid robber had not wit enough to discover them.

What a spectacle of happiness this picture, feeble as it is, displays?—Fathers and mothers, can you be insensible to it?—Will you not change your system of education?—'Tis to flatter your own vanity, 'tis to throw a lustre round yourelves, that you wish to see your children shine by their talents and attainments, and that you labour with so much ardour to accomplish it. You prepare the

tressels on which you would raise yourselves, and in your impatience to see them great you wish the happiest moments of their lives, those of their childhood, at an end. What a mistake is this !—Because you are only happy yourselves in proportion to the estimation in which you find yourselves held by others, you think you are promoting the happiness of your children in endeavouring to inspire them with the same sentiment, and in assisting them to satisfy it.—" Cruel that you are !" might they say to you, " you might have placed in our own reservoirs the water which was to quench our thirst, and you have opened the spring in the field of another."

Cease then to merit this reproach on the part of your children ; instead of embellishing their minds dazzle their eyes, give them, if you can, an indestructible opinion of themselves, send them thus armed into the world, and if they are loaded with ridicule do not make yourselves uneasy, 'tis their

happiness that is confided to you, not their glory.

In vain will you alledge that it is your duty to bring them as near as you can to perfection. Happiness is of more consequence to man than perfection; and if, through the blessing of folly, every one finds his happiness within himself, all those social virtues, to which at present we give the name of perfection, will be but useless sacrifices. 'Tis the refinement of our perceptions, 'tis the delicacy of our self-love, which renders this perfection so painful; it must be sought with vast effort in a combination of qualities agreeable to others, in the study of their tastes, and in their applauses; but such perfection is a slavery, it depends on opinion, a capricious and haughty deity. Ah! let us for ever deter those we love from worshipping her!—ask of all her followers how many secret tears this worship has been the occasion of their shedding; tears that will never be shed

by my hero. The man of talents is the sacrificer and the victim at the altar of public opinion; the fool at these same altars is the adorer and the god.

Men of genius, assist me, then, to multiply fools in the world! I can deeply feel their happiness, but you alone have the power of establishing a new system. Why will you refuse to do this? Why assume that disdainful look? The distance which separates you from us, and which appears infinite, involves perhaps millions of beings above you. Who knows whether, throughout the universe, every one is not a fool to another? Who knows whether you are not so to the inhabitants of the moon, or to some aërial spirits? Is it because you do not hear them laugh at your expense that you do not believe the thing possible? But your fools do not hear you, and 'tis the distinctive character of folly not to perceive itself, and always to take the limits of its own sight for the bounds of what actually exists.

Be, then, more timid, more distrustful, and, far from despising the fools you may meet, admire their happiness, acknowledging that nothing is wanting to give them pretensions to the title of men of genius, but to have been fools by their own choice.

XXXVIII. THE DISTRESSED FOOL.

There are fools of the happiest disposition in the world, and who live upon the best possible terms with themselves. On the happiness of these we have just expatiated. There are others subject to somewhat of asperity, whom we do not see with the same pleasure; these are the fools who have some sort of insight into their own folly,—*some sort of insight*, observe I say—who are, consequently, less secure in themselves, less at their ease, less confident. They have but a distant idea of their own mediocrity, and shut out at all hazards any light that might shine upon them; they have a certain quantity of maxims and ideas, which, very general, serve

them as an advanced guard to prevent any thing approaching near enough to sound the absolute depth of their talents and knowledge. They believe, also, that these general maxims and ideas place them upon a level with those who think, and from a high sense of their dignity, refuse to enter into details, as they would refuse any manual labour. 'Tis always with them *a long time*, *a short time*—'tis always *the past*, *the present*, *the future*, *life*—never so *many* years, so *many* days. They also employ, by preference, large adjectives, as a means of avoiding any concern with precision. They have, in short, that mixture of doubt and confidence, of high pretension and shrinking from it, which renders them often as unhappy as the complete, downright fool is otherwise. They have never the ease of what they are designed for; that ease which is as necessary to the complete character of a fool as it is in forming a true good housewife.

XXXIX. PRAISE.

Can it be believed! The greater part of those men who are evidently rendered happy themselves by being praised and applauded, never think of making use of the same means of recommending themselves to others—never seek thus to captivate those of whom they stand the most in need. Whence comes this?—I do not understand it, for the corollary seems evident, the inference is very simple. You are all a little silly, my friends—I need not explain myself any farther.

XL. TEARS.

How many different sorts of tears are there! how different are the causes of them, how various their effects!—and yet there is but one name for all.

You are moved, your eyes are moistened, you weep when others talk of you, when you talk of yourself, when you read one of your own compositions; you do not interest

me, assure yourself; I never can sympathize with that very tender partiality you have for yourself. You weep because your pride is wounded, because it is humiliated, and you are restrained in the desire you have to manifest your resentment;—I cannot sympathize, believe me, with this insolent anguish. No, tears of pride, or tears of self-love never can touch me.

And you who weep as readily as you breathe, who weep on every occasion, and at every moment, with a degrading weakness, I am ready to despise you, I turn away with disgust from that face drowned in tears, which you present as a manifestation of your sensibility.

What, then, are the tears by which we ought to be moved?—those by which, in effect, we are moved? They are the tears which escape involuntarily, from one under real affliction, which he would conceal but cannot, and which no art could produce. 'Tis your tears, venerable parents! which you

restrain with every possible effort before the world, lest they should speak too plainly the ingratitude of a beloved son;—'tis your tears, lovely child, when a harsh mother corrects you unjustly, when you are punished without knowing your fault, and when you invoke protection, uncertain whether any is to be found in the world for you;—'tis your tears, young and lovely Idalia, those tears which never would have flowed, happy as you appeared, but from the too certain infidelity of a beloved husband. Weep, lovely creature! alas! he is far from you, and you think only of him;—weep! every thing in your fortune is changed.

And you, my beloved wife, fear nothing, a single tear of your's is death to me. Fear nothing; my attentive, my vigilant heart will study your troubles from their very beginning; and love, as you know, has rendered me skilful in the art of soothing them. But when ideas equally afflictive to both assail us, when they make us feel the frailty of life

and its unequal duration, let us not seek to escape the sentiments by which we are moved; let us yield to those sweet tears which flow from a celestial origin, to those pious tears which a sacred instinct encourages us to offer up to the sovereign ruler of our destiny;—'tis he who, by one of the mysterious operations of his power, has created a solemn relation between our tears and his divine goodness. Yes, in this state of sadness and humiliation we feel ourselves nearer to our God than the proudest monarch seated upon the most mighty throne on the earth!—What a sublime subject for reflection—for consolation!

XLI. AFFECTATION.

There are few persons who have that confidence in themselves to venture to shew themselves in society exactly such as they are, without disguise or art. Sometimes they borrow the manners of others, but more commonly they have an array of their own com-

posing, which serves them on all *gala* occasions. All this avails nothing; and 'tis much worse when any one is constantly affected, exhausting superlatives at every phrase, and using extravagant gesticulations to impress the idea of being irresistibly led away. Such expressions of feeling and enthusiasm are always overdone; and this overacting, throwing a visible chill over the rest of the circle, the actor believes he has not coloured his part sufficiently, and becomes ten times more extravagant. Thus affectation is an absurdity which is ever increasing where it has once been indulged, and which must defeat its own ends. Why force people to lower the reckoning which you demand of them?—they are always ready enough to do it, and, thus called upon, will do it with such a lavish hand, that they will probably subtract from what is really your due.

XLII. THE CREDULITY OF PARENTS.

Children brought up by credulous parents are almost always affected. They find themselves praised and caressed for expressions of sentiment far beyond the truth, and they make use of this means, this very easy means of pleasing. This does not happen with parents who have just perceptions, and never permit hyperbole in the mouths of their children.

XLIII. REPROACHES.

If the time to repair a fault be passed, never tell a man that he conducted himself ill on such or such an occasion; if he have any feeling his own repentance will be his sufficient correction.

XLIV. MISANTHROPY.

Chrysippus gives himself out as a misanthrope, yet he is exceedingly anxious to stand well in the public opinion. He must then

forget that this public consists of *men*, the beings whom he hates and despises. I do not love to hear any one say, as is too common, that the more we know of mankind the less we esteem them ; this shews great asperity, and we ought all to wish that it should be unjust.

Our imagination does not embellish men whom we see very near; this is their first offence. But when you cast the severest censures upon them, when they appear to you odious, even criminal, it is very likely that you would judge them with less rigour if you knew them better, if you could penetrate into their very inmost thoughts. You would then, perhaps, see what hesitations, what conflicts preceded the crime—what remorse followed it; you would perceive what opportunities, what chances, have conducted one person along the straight road, or thrown another into the crooked one. You would see, in reading over, page by page, the mysterious history of the human heart, that a first

defeat in a conflict with some violent passion, fixed, perhaps, the fate of a life now tarnished for ever in the public opinion. You would, perhaps, see two men equally upon the brink of the precipice of vice, the one of whom is saved by seizing the arm of a friend held out to his rescue; while the other has fallen in, because no one was near to represent to him his danger, and take him by the hand to lead him away from it. You will, perhaps, farther observe, that an hour—nay, an instant, more of reflection, would have prevented the fatal determination which destroys the honour and the life of a man;—you will, perhaps, see, and you cannot see it without emotion, that, by a singular combination of circumstances, this man, who so boldly violates public order, is a good father, an affectionate husband, a faithful friend.

Again, may it not happen that a public crime is the effect of mild and gentle habits. Euphemon has just increased, by his vote, the number of suffrages which condemn an

innocent man to death; he has been guilty of a horrible action, for he did not himself believe the victim guilty. But examine his heart, study it, follow all its movements, fear has been the principle which overswayed his better judgment; he saw an infuriated populace ready to plunge their murderous daggers in his bosom if he dared to oppose the triumphant party; his resolution failed him at a moment so awful. But if he clung feebly to life, it was that he has a wife whom he adores, and by whom he is adored; that he has a number of young children, the constant objects of his paternal care and tenderness, who have no other protector. He was criminal undoubtedly, he feels it himself, his soul is cruelly troubled with the reflection; but since his situation excites your pity, surely your severity would be softened by knowing him better.

All my observations, then, have this aim; to prove that a more intimate knowledge of mankind does not necessarily lead to despis-

ing them more. Happy conclusion, which we may very properly class among the number of consolatory truths. Shall we not then indulge the hope that the Sovereign Creator, the God who knows all our secret sentiments, our secret resolutions, the God who sees our thoughts from the beginning to the end, who follows them through all their turnings and their windings: that this God is a God of indulgence and commiseration. We shall thus comprehend more fully why Jesus Christ, that profound instructor, that divine guide, made use—with so much simplicity made use of those memorable words to direct our judgments upon our fellow-creatures—our judgments upon their failings and their weaknesses: "*He among you who is without guilt cast the first stone at her.*"—"*There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.*"—"*Because she has loved much, much shall be pardoned to her.*"—No, no, severe and misanthropic censurers, it is not in knowing man better that you ought to despise him, to hate him the more.

XLV. THEY.

They condemn you—*they* accuse you—*they* expect of you such a justification, such a sacrifice—*they* say such or such a thing of you—*they* will say of you, in short:—What, then, is this monarch THEY to whose sovereign authority such constant appeals are made?

He is a king without show, without pomp, without any visible throne, yet whom every one obeys, at whose voice every one trembles; a king singular in this, that he is equally master in great, as in little things.—*They* no longer talk politics, canvass the government, discuss social interests—and at the instant every one avoids these topics of conversation.—*They* no longer wear feathers in the head-dress, and from one end of Europe to the other every lady throws her feathers aside.—*They*, most puissant monarch! how delightful it is to set you at defiance, and yet to do so we must live in perfect solitude.—*They*, most puissant monarch! continue to

hold your jurisdiction in France, 'tis there that you will always find abundant recruits for the militia which constitutes your strength, the immense legion of imitators.

XLVI. DEFECTS TRANSFORMED INTO QUALITIES.

Cleon, instead of correcting his defects, has taken it into his head to make them received in the world as qualities. He will have us take his indolence for a noble indifference to the vanities of the world, to the different objects which intoxicate mankind; — he is rritable, and he talks of nothing but his excessive sensibility; he is brutal in his manners, and he decorates his brutality with the lofty appellation of frankness. His avarice he calls a love of order, and he gives as the origin of his suspicious disposition, a perfect knowledge of mankind. His negligence, his forgetfulness, are purposed delays, intended procrastinations; in short, even to the sterility of his mind, it is not his fault if we do not mistake it, and if it does not pass in the

public opinion as a circumspection exacted by circumstances. His air of contempt is the only one of his defects which he never tries to explain into some quality ; it is a weapon with which he chuses to arm himself, and he expects it to be feared.—In this he is right, for he never could succeed in putting a new varnish upon the matter ; the self-love of others is too much upon the watch to take in two senses any thing by which that is touched. In fine, if Cleon had devoted half the time to improving himself that he has done to endeavouring to make himself appear what he is not, he would have attained a high distinction in society.

XLVII. OLD MEN : EXPRESSIONS WHICH DO NOT SUIT THEM.

Poor old men !—The thing which they are the last to learn is, that there are certain modes of expression which they ought to employ very discreetly, even among their children and grand-children—expressions of tenderness and fondness.—I doubt whether lan-

guage of this kind suits them towards any person. *I love you* is a sort of etherial phrase —a phrase from heaven, which seems to require on earth the accompaniment of beauty, and all the lovely array of youth.

XLVIII. FRAGMENT UPON THE CUSTOMS OF SOCIETY IN FRANCE IN 1786.

The ceremonials of Germany have never been introduced in France, and the political ranks are not fixed there invariably as they are in England; 'tis opinion alone that gives the tone to society, which regulates the gradations of respect and distinction attached to situation, birth, and rank. There is, indeed, a regular system established in these things, but it may be called traditionary law only, it is nowhere reduced to writing, and it has been refined upon so much in a course of years, the distinctions are become so very nice, that it may be called at present the legislature of *well-understoods*.

This denomination would be the more just

since even if nobody claims what seems his right, it is nevertheless perfectly obvious that every one is constantly thinking of it, and that all people are tenacious of the place which they know to be their's; thus while ranks may seem to be confounded, even the slightest gradation is indicated by some degree of shade. The most important task of the mistress of a house, particularly if she be herself a *great lady*, is to let every body see that she perfectly understands all these differences, and to do it with so much delicacy that she shall leave no one any just subject of complaint. A *great lady*, who is in the practice of receiving company, has always her own place marked out on one side of the chimney in a manner that cannot be mistaken. Her chair must be of a particular construction, simple, but convenient, so as to admit the supposition that her ordinary habits are in no way interrupted. A piece of embroidery or tambour-work in a frame, which can easily be drawn nearer to her, or pushed farther off, is

always before her, through which she passes and repasses a needle with elegant *non chalance*. This frame dispenses with the mistress of the house rising entirely, or rising too vulgarly, when any new guests come into the room.

There are some exceptions, however, to this regulation, but they are few, and made only in favour of a prince of the blood-royal, wives of foreigners of the first distinction, a general who has gained a great battle, or a minister in the highest credit; it is always, however, to be understood in the case of the latter, that 'tis to his personal merit, not his rank, the compliment is paid. There is also a particular manner of receiving persons who hold what may be called a dubious situation in the world, who are to be inspired with confidence. If this be mistaken, a hasty interrogation, made in a sharp accent, soon makes them understand that the confidence taken was beyond the mark intended. More address is requisite with persons who rank very near your own line, or not so far removed from you

as to be decidedly of inferior rank, lest a word or gesture should seem to mark on your part a feeling of superiority. 'Tis taste, 'tis a certain tact which combine to regulate the manners of a *great lady*, mistress of the house, upon occasions of this importance—which prevent her making any mistakes in the nice distinctions necessary to be observed in the midst of her drawing-room.

The women of condition, the women of quality, the women of the court, titled women, women who bear a name noted in history, women of high personal birth married to husbands inferior to themselves, women who by marriage have changed a common name for a very distinguished one, women whose principal claim to distinction is in having a good house, an expensive establishment, and giving elegant suppers—towards each of these some distinct ceremonial is to be observed on receiving them. It is very easy to a German genealogist to determine the number of quarterings necessary to give a title to be received

into a chapter, but to seize readily such almost imperceptible differences, and adapt the proper tone and manner to them is a much more arduous undertaking; all the French address, and a great habit of mingling with the world, is necessary to get through it with *eclat.* It is, moreover, *amour-propre*, ready to take offence at the most trifling deviation, that one of these expert generals has to manage, so that any thing not perfectly correct will be immediately seized.

We must not omit, also, to cast a glance over the manner in which each one individually studies to take their rank in great companies; this is done equally by the nicest, by almost imperceptible refinements. I shall cite the women as examples, since the guardianship of these little vanities is more particularly confided to them; it seems even as if the men will have it thus. They have, from their entrance into the drawing-room, a manner of addressing their acquaintance, of sitting down, of looking around them, which

immediately marks their degree of consequence, and in what proportion they consider themselves with regard to others. In their manner of speaking, also, there is a sort of drawl or languor, more or less in degree according to the person they are addressing. But the great essential of all is the curtesy; in this the shadings are carried almost to infinity, from the accompaniment of raising a single shoulder, which is almost an impertinence, to that noble and respectful curtesy which few women know how to make with perfect grace. The slow bend with the eyes cast down, body upright, and a manner of rising, looking then modestly at the person, and throwing the body back gracefully; all this shews more refinement, more delicacy than the manner of speaking, and is still more expressive as a mark of respect.

There is a moment of great conflict to self-consequence, and that is, when the company go from the drawing-room to the dinner-room. The gentlemen do not now hand the ladies,

as formerly; this custom has probably changed in proportion as the system of vanities has been finer spun; it was necessary then to put the men out of the question, because they have always a knack of introducing something positive in these matters. See, then, the ladies all approaching the door to file off to the dinner-room. One would say, by their decided air, that no idea of rivalship enters into their minds, yet, perhaps, 'tis the reigning idea among them all. Some, feigning perfect absence of mind, are the first at the door, when, finding they are not followed, they utter an exclamation of astonishment at their own absence, or burst into an immoderate laugh at it, retiring back a little at the same time, when some others will say, "*Oh pray ladies go on,*" yet pushing forwards themselves to get before them; while those who are in advance endeavour to keep so, under the sanction of the *go on*, which gives them permission to take the precedence. The superiority is much more marked when, to

the *pray go on, ladies*, is added, *you are next the door;* such a reason for desiring them to proceed is extremely humiliating, since it shews decidedly the opinion that they have no other claim to go first. The revenge taken by these ladies is to say: "*Nay, my lady countess, I cannot think of going before you,*" as if it were by grace only that they decline it, that their right to it is clear. The countess yields to the invitation, and leads the van, the others follow; some, however, have purposely remained all the time holding back, not chusing to have their place at all brought into question, one having dropped her fan, another having lost her gloves, as reasons why they were not more in advance. In short, each one has her part to play in this little scene, which is performed by each with the most scrupulous exactness.

The men, as I have said, do not enter the lists in these little vanities, but they also have their pretensions. These are directed to more marked objects, which do not occur

daily; such they avoid carefully, because they reciprocally fear the consequences, since opinion, by lessening distances, will not allow any one to refuse a reparation. We all know, however, that the first classes of society have adopted in succession many marks of distinction which have immediately been thrown aside when imitated by the second classes. All sorts of things in this way have been devised; but leave vanity to work its own way, it will never fail to find new modes of displaying itself * * * * * *

* * * * * * 1798.

We see, in reading this fragment, that among the customs of society in France at the period immediately preceding the Revolution, fresh vanities were every day introducing themselves under the most fine-spun forms. Two years after—only two years—the language had not sufficient force to express the different pretensions, to designate the new sentiments brought into play;—at the conclusion of a period—of a state of so-

ciety, where nothing was to be strongly expressed, where forms and manners were almost become the equivalent of words, the language assumed a roughness of which it is difficult to form an idea. A number of words were introduced more energetic than the things to which they were applied—a number of barbarous words which seemed to have been forged in the dark caverns of Vulcan, by the same hands that moulded the thunderbolts. What a contrast in so short a space of time!—'tis one of the most striking, and the most remarkable, of this most remarkable period.

XLIX. HABIT AMONG SERVANTS.

Habit is to servants a sort of written law; we must conform ourselves to it or break with them entirely.

L. THE DESPOT.

The despot who keeps the nation at a great distance from all public affairs, finishes by

rendering the people indifferent to them: they may still have a *native land*—they have no longer a *country*.

LI. DANGEROUS DEPOSITARIES OF SECRETS.

Never trust your secrets to people with sterile minds, who have at the same time a great desire to make themselves agreeable. Not having any ideas of their own to communicate, they will repeat with delight those which have been by chance thrown in their way.

LII. HABITUAL LAUGHS.

That laugh of Fierval's at whatever you say lively or clever is a mere laugh of habit; do not be vain of such a tribute, he began to laugh before you began to speak.

LIII. A HAPPINESS PECULIAR TO THE LOWER CLASSES OF MANKIND.

It is a great pity that the lower classes of mankind have not the power of enjoying in

perfection the delights of sentiment. If they had, what a singular happiness would they find in the obligation imposed upon them of occupying themselves constantly together upon one common interest—their domestic œconomy.

LIV. LANGUAGE OF MADAME DE STAEL.

The language of Madame de Staël has in it I know not what that borders upon beauty.

LV. WE MUST NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH OF SUBALTERNS.

You ask why the subalterns by whom you are surrounded never think of telling you such and such a thing, very simple, but which you would be delighted to hear. Reflect that, if they had this degree of intellect, they would know what might be done with praise well applied, and would never restrain their ambition to being your servants.

LVI. THE FIRST RECEPTION.

When a man in a state inferior to your own is presented to you be careful to give him a very cordial reception; he will never forget that you inspired him with confidence in a moment of anxiety. Very different should be the conduct observed towards persons in a situation superior to your own; they come to you persuaded that they are doing you great honour, and you should shew them that you are not of the same opinion. Receive them with an air of respect, but extremely calm; this is what accords best with the situation of both.

LVII. NO MORE.

No more! Never!—what words for feeble mortals—for they are words which have no bounds. *I shall never see him more*, would be a phrase which we could not have power to pronounce if we had not the feeling of an existence after this life.

LVIII. GLORY.

There are men who can obtain glory, but cannot keep it.

LIX. CONSCRIPTION.

What an immense distance there is in every way between the time when the quarrels of mighty states were terminated by a single combat, and the present, when potentates cannot be satisfied with voluntary enrolments, but must, by compulsion, bring the whole body of citizens into the field. Yes, the distance is great indeed, in every way, between the conscription of our days and the time of the Horatii and the Curiatii.

LX. ROBESPIERRE.

Robespierre and his accomplices are held in horror by people of the present time, because of their unjust hatreds, their sanguinary dispositions, their abominable acts of violence. By posterity they will be reproached above

all things with having thrown a discredit on the name of liberty from having it continually in their mouths, and representing it as the object of all their thoughts, while in fact their sole aim was the maintenance of their own tyranny, the success of their own hypocrisy.

LXI. SOLITUDE.

Happy he who can still esteem himself after having lived for some time in solitude, after having had time to reflect upon the past, after having had time to examine his own heart with nice attention!—Oh, formidable trial!

LXII. THE WORD TO GUILLOTINE.

Men of levity will you never cease to say: "*My father, my brother, my friend, was* GUILLOTINED?"—Is it becoming in you to make use of this word?—a word which has become horrible by the tone of gaiety which our language gives it, and which, as you

know, cherishes in the people an indifference to the lamentable fate of so many innocent victims.

LXIII. THE WANT OF INTEREST IN WHAT WE SAY.

See the two brothers Bersalis.—They have, perhaps, much the same portion of talents and attainments; but what a difference in the interest inspired by their conversation!—The one feels before he speaks, his animated features assure me he does: the other, even after he has spoken, does not feel.—The one is a man for the heart—a man full of life: the other is one of the books, sometimes shut, sometimes open, that are scattered here and there around me.

LXIV. PERFECT PIETY.

Religious upholders of pure morality, faithful servants of God, you only have a right to make but one world of this life and the next; nothing darkens your perspective, nothing

checks your hopes. What a noble spectacle is firm faith united with pure virtue!—There are, I will believe, many examples of such men, but one alone in all its perfection, in all its simplicity was ever known to me.—He rests for ever engraven on my memory.

LXV. A SINGULAR PRETENSION.

The pretension that Falbert arrogates to himself in society is no less ridiculous than it is inconvenient. He wants to be intreated to do what he wishes, and seeks by every means to make that appear a sacrifice of his tastes which is to him the most agreeable thing in the world.

LXVI. THE ART TO BE USED WITH OTHERS.

There is a means of success commonly neglected by inferiors, which is to observe the mode of attack chosen by their patron, when he seeks to obtain some object from a man in power. It is rare that a person may not be

taken himself with the same arts which he employs to gain his point with another. It is that in every way we touch each other, and that our impressions almost always guide our thoughts.

LXVII. LIBERTY.

The proportion of lofty souls upon the earth is so small that there would be an end for ever of all taste for liberty, if as the price of an entire submission to the will of one alone, the multitude could enjoy in perfect security the good things which they most esteem. But it is not thus that things pass in the social world; the exchange of obedience against repose is not a simple compact, and one which is always offered to the most docile nations. It is by his passions, no less than by his knowledge, that a despot governs; thus arbitrary authority will never be a sufficient guarantee to ensure public repose.

Silence them, make them obey—these are the vows you address to your master; but he

will not succeed if he is not wise, for the very walls cry out against absurdity and folly.—Well, we will take as our master a man of talents and resolution, courageous, yet full of moderation, severe, yet good. *We will take*—that is very well said, but it is not we that *take*, we are commonly *taken*. And if it were in our power to *take*, Nature in all her riches, in all her fecundity, does not in one, two, or many centuries produce such a man. Will you trust to popular elections? what a blind guide! the best regulated among these elections furnish nothing but scenes of trouble and confusion.—Will you run the chance of a regular order of succession?—this is better, but then you draw in a lottery where there are ten blanks to one prize.—Would you have the soldiers, the prætorian bands, give you a master?—they gave the Romans a Nero as well as a Titus, and an authority erected by violence must be supported by the same means. There must be then, in theory, either precautions which direct, which rule, which restrain the people

in republics, or double powers which, by a wise combination, prevent the abuses that arise from a sole authority in monarchies.

These two latter questions are, I think, treated in as close a point of view as possible in my work entitled *Last View, &c.;* it contains, at least in the details, many just and new ideas.

" Whatever you please," I have heard sensible men say, " provided you do not talk to us of liberty; we have just had too fatal an experience of it."—They are very wrong.—In the first place it is not of *liberty* that you have had this fatal experience, but of an arbitrary authority seized by demagogues to which they gave the specious name of liberty. Say that all political revolutions are dangerous and you will be right; but they are so whether the transition be from liberty to despotism, or from despotism to liberty. The proof of this truth is to be found in the two epochs which began and finished the Roman Republic.

Let us also observe well that the word liberty

is a source of great errors. In private life it means the faculty of acting according to our own will; carry this into social order, into the political system; we shall find this same word representing much rather the means of preventing than of acting. 'Tis on the behalf of liberty that the English laws oppose barriers to the regal power, to the authority of a single man, to the insulated authority of either of the two Houses of Parliament, to the authority of the judges, of the civil magistrates. In order, then, to restore liberty to the honour which is so justly her due, to reinstate her in politics, we must give her another name—a name more analogous to her spirit—a name derived from the idea of *obstacles*, of *restraint*, of *prevention*. Thus we shall hold to the truth, and perfectly to the truth.

LXVIII. BEING OCCUPIED WITH ONESELF.

If by entertaining others incessantly with myself I cannot get them to think of me, how

would it be if I were to lose sight of myself, to forget myself for some moments?—This is a very false mode of reasoning, yet by no means uncommon.

LXIX. PUBLIC OPINION.

In countries where public opinion is stifled, the rulers govern much more at their ease; but then the praise they receive has not the character which alone can stamp a value upon it; it is an uproar of slaves, not an enlightened sentiment.

LXX. DEATH.

Let us not joke upon death; we do not know him, so powerful a distraction is life. But when he insists upon being acquainted with us, when he will speak with us *tête-à-tête*, when he banishes day from us to make us accompany him into darkness, when he orders us to follow and will not answer any of our questions, what trouble must be brought upon us.—Lights of religion! ye

blessed, ye consolatory lights ! you appear and all is changed.

LXXI. LOVE, AND ITS LANGUAGE.

The faculty of loving has assuredly a right to claim a high station of honour among the benevolent conceptions of nature ; for among all the sentiments of which man is susceptible it is the only one that no person ever could feign completely. There are a thousand ways of expressing hatred, contempt, indignation ; there is but one tone for saying *I love you* which can be believed.

LXXII. A SPIRIT OF DECISION.

Decision is burthensome to the common people ; every sort of comparison annoys them. Thus, even in details to which they are the most habituated, if you ask them, *What should I do ?*—they will always answer : *Whatever you please, sir.* They consider *to will*, like science, as an appendage to greatness, as a privilege attached to rank. A

reason this, combined with many others, for confining the authority of opinion to the higher classes of society; 'tis there alone that it can acquire sufficient power to guide men, and teach them the way to honour.

LXXIII. PRAISE.

It is commonly said that praise must be offered with delicacy to men of understanding; the idea is very just; but let us not thence conclude that people of understanding are indifferent to praise.—They love it—perhaps they love it more than others, and it is very natural they should, since they are not satisfied with their own suffrages—since they cannot, like fools, pay themselves implicit homage; nor are they free, like people of middling talents, from inquietude of imagination. Praise is then salutary to them, it amalgamates perfectly with their nature.

Why, then, is it necessary to apply it with so much discretion? It is that such men perceive more readily than others the moment when

we run into extravagance and hyperbole, when we repose ourselves on their *amour-propre*, when we permit ourselves to treat them as credulous children. They are then angry, but it is not at the praises they take offence, they are angry with the man, who either distributes them awkwardly, or who endeavours to turn him whom he seems to praise into ridicule. Praise men of understanding then, but let it be within bounds and with address; let it be the expression of your thoughts with, perhaps, something more, but very, very little;—this is the mode to support your honour, and attain the end proposed.

LXXIV. FALSE SHOW OF MODESTY.

You are surprised that Clito places himself so low, so very low, when he speaks of his talents, his attainments, his memory.—What modesty! you say.—It is not that.—What is it then?—He is afraid above all things that his exact measure should be taken, and he

traces a grand circle around him, that he may not be touched by any body. He is a man who, to hide his stature, wraps himself in a long cloak.

LXXV. EASE IN YOUR SITUATION.

A very essential ingredient to happiness is to be at ease in your situation; thus we keep at a distance the habitual feeling of what is wanting to us. Ease of situation is an idea which may be applied equally to fortune, to ambition, and to vanity. You know the extent of your present property and your resources; keep your expenses below this mark, regulate your household establishment according to this principle; you will thus guarantee your mind from a state of perpetual alarm lest your affairs should get into derangement. There is equally an *ease of situation* with regard to our *amour-propre;* confine your pretensions within the circle of your means, you will then be above the reach of humiliation; you will have nothing to fear

from rivalship. With the assistance of habit we may be satisfied in any situation, provided comparisons with others are not perpetually reminding us of what is wanting to ourselves.

Women, above all, who are at the age to be admired, would do well to restrain their coquetry within prudent limits. If they would be always exercising their power, they will be always in pain; if they will expose themselves perpetually to receiving the rude lessons of age, or to experiencing the numberless chances which destroy beauty before the regular termination of its reign, they must expect to endure continual mortifications.

'Tis, then, in every situation and circumstance of life, not only with respect to fortune, but to all our wishes, that ease is the first essential to happiness, and that ease is only to be obtained by moderation in our wishes.

LXXVI. SECOND MARRIAGES.

Women are so much in want of a support, men of a confident, both of a near alliance, that not only a first marriage, but a second, nay, a third, is, speaking soberly and calmly, a reasonable engagement to take upon ourselves. Children may in some sort fill up a vacuum in life, but it is only with the love you bear to them; you cannot make them the confidents of your secret pains, the sharers in all your anguish, both physical and moral. It is not for them to follow and direct all the movements of your heart, to inspire you with courage, to warn you of the advances of age, to tell you when such and such things are no longer suited to your years. It would be to reverse the order of Nature, it would be to a certain degree a want of decorum, at least it would be a want of taste, to make them the companions of your old age, the associates of the little histories of your youth, to which, in old age, we so fondly recur. You may

love them, they may honour you, but some other relation is wanting, another kind of love is necessary to the heart, if it would not feel any vacuum. If, then, by the death of a husband or a wife you feel yourself insulated in the world, seek the only refuge that can be found for this desolate feeling—marry again. I would for another reason say marry again—that is, to keep yourself out of the power of servants. You cannot have your children always about you, they too must marry, they must be settled in the world; and if left to yourself in old age, whether man or woman, you are very likely to become a victim to the tyranny of some favourite servant, one of the worst of tyrannies.

I give this advice, though I know that it will not suit all circumstances, all dispositions, but I think where it can be followed that it is the path of true wisdom. I know that there are people who, having once loved ardently, would almost consider the admission of any second love as treason to the first.

There are, I believe, even hearts so constituted, that the sentiment of the first love can never be extinguished so as to admit of a second—who would find it impossible to form any new tie—nay, who think that death itself cannot dissolve an engagement once made. Ye whose hearts are thus constructed, how much are ye to be pitied !—but go not a second time to the altar absorbed in the recollection of that look, so mild, so tender, so full of suffering at the idea of the approaching separation, which the dying object of your affection cast upon you: what a present would a heart thus occupied be to one who expects to be loved as much as it loves. No, no; if your soul be thus constituted, live on your first love alone; let the remembrance of that rule despotically the destiny of your future life.

LXXVII. DEATH.

When death deprives us of a friend, we think only of our own grief. We ought to give one moment of recollection to the regrets

that friend must have felt at finding himself constrained to quit life.

LXXVIII. DEATH.

We think meanly of men who evince any fear of death. 'Tis, however, one of th most extraordinary effects of habit that we can in any way familiarize our minds to so tremendous an idea, carrying with it so awful a perspective.

LXXIX. POLITICAL MORALS.

Experience is about to establish the validity of an abstract truth which has long been maintained by all men of integrity and sound judgment. It is that morality once banished from the political relations between states, nothing is firm, every thing is shaken in the grand social federation; props will be perpetually wanted.

LXXX. MORALITY.

You laugh at the excellent Clotus, who in panegyrising any one dwells for a long time

upon his goodness, his generosity, his candour, and only adverts transiently, and at the conclusion, to the brilliant qualities of his mind. You laugh at the good man, to use your own expression;—I, for my part, answer on his behalf, that morality is the essence of all talents, the first quality of the mind, the spirit of nations, the spirit of ages. The imagination, with all its flashes, is but the spirit of the individual, the spirit of the moment, the spirit which quickly passes away and disappears.

LXXXI. MEN OF EDUCATION.

'Tis a singular thing to see men become illustrious in the paths of science with the assistance of fortune and the means of education, yet to think education unnecessary to qualify a man for sharing in the government of a state. Such was, nevertheless, the system of the Jacobins.

LXXXII. TIMIDITY.

Timid persons are lost the moment they perceive themselves the subjects of observation; they seek words but cannot find them. I believe a principal reason why women commonly speak more fluently than men, is the habit they early contract of having always, in company, some piece of work in their hands. This gives them confidence; it is a sort of screen behind which they retire, when, being less seen, words flow more freely.

LXXXIII. CHARITY.

The charity which we prescribe to ourselves—which subjects us to painful sacrifices, is, perhaps, the most meritorious; but a charity which results from feeling, which is prompted by a tender sentiment, which is the result of natural benevolence, is undoubtedly the most soothing, the most to be relied on. In loving to do good, to relieve suffering, to spread a calm over an afflicted mind, we

make ourselves in some sort the representatives of that perfect Being who is a God of goodness and compassion; we resign our souls to the sweetest thoughts, and catch a ray of hope to enlighten a dark futurity.

LXXXIV. THE DURATION OF LIFE.

The universe, throughout the whole extent of which we have any knowledge, is composed of multifarious relations, the distinctive stamps of a creative genius, and a directing wisdom. One of these relationships, which has often struck me, and to which I have never found any one pay attention, is the exact proportion established between our interest in the vanities of the world, and the duration of our existence here below. We are only endowed with sufficient emulation, even with sufficient curiosity, for the course of an ordinary life, and if, by a peculiar combination of circumstances, these are exhausted at too early a period, we must almost inevitably fall into *ennui* when we are obliged to

quit a scene so animated, so exciting at its commencement.

If, then, we would, in our mortal career, preserve a fund for constantly creating some new interest, we must proceed with measured steps along the high and beaten road which lies open before us. We shew great ignorance of the nature of happiness, and the means by which it is to be attained, when we frame schemes and wishes to acquire a large fortune rapidly, and to arrive, without loss of time, at the highest point of glory or renown.

Every thing within us and around us is ordered with the profoundest wisdom ; every thing in the primary ideas, in the elementary causes, of the grand moral phenomenon of which we form a part, is in perfect harmony. When this truth presents itself to my mind under any new relationship, I am the more inspired with the sweetest hopes. In seeing these relationships ever invariable, ever just between every thing that exists around us and within us, I persuade myself that such a

relationship exists between my wishes and the future ;—I persuade myself that I shall one day see all the objects of my tenderest affection re-appear in a new country ; those that have quitted me, and those that I must quit, the objects alike of my inexhaustible affection.

LXXXV. CONFIDENCE IN OURSELVES.

Undoubtedly an over-confidence in ourselves leads us to commit very great faults, but want of confidence leads us into more frequent and greater faults. Ye miserable poltroons ! I would gladly say to people when I see them, through diffidence in themselves, borrow a tone, an expression, an opinion, from another ;—ye miserable poltroons ! why have ye not courage to be yourselves ?—you would make a better figure by many degrees. There is no grace, nothing interesting without being natural—nothing determined, nothing commanding.

LXXXVI. BARREN MINDS.

Persons of barren minds are under great perplexity and ill at their ease, when they must either make visits or receive them. They would gladly see a violent tempest in the natural world, or a violent revolution in the moral world, break out on a sudden, that they might be furnished with a topic for beginning the conversation.

LXXXVII. THE VAGUE.

Every thing is positive, every thing is decided in the pleasures of the senses; but the vague is necessary to the enjoyments of the imagination. This truth is striking even in style, where the strongest impressions are often made by the use of a bold expression, by the preference of a vague and half unintelligible word over one that is clear and determinate. Is it that our mind, so different from our physical nature, even now in its

corporeal prison, partakes of the indefinite which forms its essence?

LXXXVIII. THE DESPOT.

A despot can never arrive at any sure knowledge of the public opinion, for no one will venture to tell him an unpleasant truth. He seems always ready to say like the Emperor of Mogul to his partner at whist: "*Play hearts, or your head shall be struck off.*"

LXXXIX. TASTE IN THE MANNERS.

Natural grace cannot be given, but a taste in the manners may be acquired, and this taste is an excellent substitute for grace. The people about the court in France all had the appearance of grace, yet they were, in fact, only distinguished by taste in the manners. It was not alone to the flexibility of the national character that they were indebted for this taste, it was in great measure the effect of their situation. They were anxious to captivate two masters, the monarch and pub-

lic opinion; the monarch as the source whence lucrative situations and honorary titles were derived; public opinion as determining the rank in society and regulating the degree of esteem and consideration in which every one was to be held. The people of the court seeking both these sorts of recompense regulated their conduct accordingly, so that by degrees they gave their suppleness an air of something noble, and mingled a sort of ease in their most assiduous attentions. And since the same freedom of language cannot be admitted in the court as in the city, in the presence of the sovereign as in the midst of our equals, it was by their manners that the courtiers were obliged to express the sentiments imposed upon them. Thus taste in the manners belongs solely to persons arrived at a certain degree of refinement in their civil and political relationships, while grace may ornament those who approach the nearest to nature.

'Tis to flattery and gallantry that taste in

the manners more particularly applies; and this taste, composed of the finest shadings, had become so subtile, that the first influence of the Revolution dissipated it like vapour.

XC. AFFLICTIONS OF THE SOUL.

There is something so majestic in the afflictions of the soul, that we have been able to introduce madness upon the stage without any derogation from the dignity of either. Let us but figure to ourselves an afflicted mother who, after the loss of a beloved daughter, never could divest herself of this mania; whenever she mentioned her daughter's name she could not forbear adding the date of her death: *My daughter who died the 15th of February*, 1781.—This simple but affecting recapitulation would finish by making every one shudder who heard it.—Afflictions of the soul! griefs all-powerful! whence do you come?—'Tis from the same God who has permitted us to love: let us then resume courage.

XCI. THE RELIGIOUS VADE-MECUM.

How can I possibly doubt that there is an Intelligence which holds authority—which holds supreme authority over the universe? I know a little empire governed by intelligence; that intelligence is in me—that intelligence is me. For the least works, the works of man, an intelligence has been found necessary, and none is to be allowed in the ordering of the universe, none is to be wanted.—How can such a contradiction be admitted?

This universe is nevertheless splendid, it is magnificent. Why then not associate the most stupendous work we know among all visible things, with the most admirable thing we know among invisible ones, with thought. What order, what regularity do we see in the whole; what variety in the details; what riches! —every where miracles of wisdom are exhibited; every where is the signet of power impressed. Is there any thing that does not answer some end?—and what is an end but the re-

sult of reflection ?—what is the constant tendency of every thing towards its end but the result of reflection ?—Is it not then madness to think of abstracting intelligence from the organization of the world ?

O my God ! what use do men make of that mind which thou hast bestowed upon them to the intent that they might partially know thee !—They cannot understand thy nature, they say, but the fly who hovers about them does not understand their's, yet they exist. And why do they say that they do not understand God ?—Can we not form some idea of him in augmenting hypothetically the prodigy of our own faculties ? The miraculous authority of our will over our actions is not more easy to be explained than those beautiful words of the Holy Scriptures: "*He spake the word and they were made ; he commanded and they were created.*"—But we see the authority of our will over our actions, and can we not see the same influence of the Divine Will over the ordering and motion of the

universe? Yes, one of these two mysteries is more manifest than the other—at least it is so to us; but the analogy is perfect; and not to believe but from experience is to reject two great sources of light—imagination and sentiment: imagination which, in its perceptions, stretches beyond the truths discovered by reason, and sentiment which is our innate science. Shall we, enjoying the finest spiritual gifts, but renouncing the use of them, reduce ourselves to a level with inferior beings, whose looks cannot be raised to heaven, and whose intelligence is subservient only to gratifying the wishes of their senses? The noblest advantage man possesses is being endowed with faculties which, when improved by education, approach him to the idea of God.

We are very far indeed from being able to form a perfect conception of an infinite Being; but to men of rigorous attention—to men of genius, one degree of increased power, a trifling promotion in the scale of beings, might

render evident what they now see confusedly. This time may perhaps come, though it is not come yet; and, surrounded as we are with mysterious miracles, ought we to be very much surprised if the divine essence is still a secret among us? Let there be a league made —a league among all men who are friends of order, among all men of sentiment and sensibility, to strengthen the belief in the existence of a God, to defend an opinion so necessary, an opinion so consoling, against all the attacks of the age.

Human springs are too weak to restrain man within the bounds of his duty, an authority is required which speaks to the conscience, which makes it tremble. O, conscience! thou mighty tribunal in our intellectual circle, thou first tribunal in the moral empire of the world, thou art at once the effect and the proof of the existence of a God.

Neither is there any happiness, any repose for us but in such a belief. If there were no central mind to this vast universe, we should

be, in common with all other beings, the product of necessity; and necessity is an abstract authority without love, without pity, which cannot be touched with our tears, or won by our prayers. What a horrible supposition! But under the idea of a God, such as our mind discovers him, such as our heart receives him, such as our conscience announces him—with this God, greater than his works but united by infinity with them all—with this supreme God, with the full conviction of his existence, we pass through life in the midst of the delights of hope.

No; let us believe that we are permitted to implore this Divine Master of the world, that we are permitted to love him, and we shall then believe that our vows, our wishes, our ideas with respect to the future, with respect to our own happiness, are not a vain illusion;—we shall not believe, moreover, that our imagination has the power of soaring beyond time only to make us its sport;—indeed, we should scarcely be worth the

pains of being deceived, and of being deceived with so much *éclat* if we were only destined to an ephemeral existence. There is nothing false throughout the universe; every object has its mark, every species its peculiar stamp; such is at least the order of the physical world; and if we cannot see with equal distinctness the order and system of the moral world, we may reasonably complete our study, and fix our opinions by explaining the spirit of invisible things according to the sense of certain truths presented to us by the things that are visible. This we may do reasonably, since every thing emanates from the same intelligence and depends on the same power.

We wish for more clearness as to our destiny, but the knowledge that we have is immense, and we should be more struck if we had not arrived at it by degrees. We wish for more clearness as to our destiny, but the obscurity in which it is involved has its motive, its end, in the vast plans of the Supreme Being. We perceive that this obscurity ac-

cords perfectly with the love of liberty, with the merit of virtue, but there are still other reasons for all that is, reasons which we cannot penetrate;—there is some stupendous secret concealed behind the curtain dropped upon the great theatre of the world. Let us receive with respect all that has been confided to us respecting the views of the Eternal, our God, and let us not yield ourselves up to vain researches, which only contribute to our unhappiness.

Here on this earth, 'tis fear, 'tis hope that essentially compose our life, and these two sentiments both had a beginning; thus man, in his moral nature, is not a finished being, he is but on the road, he still proceeds forwards. But the term of his travels is the secret of the author of his existence, the secret of him who governs the universality of worlds, who reigns over the present and over the future—of him who, by a mysterious power, for a sublime purpose, has created the distances in infinite space, has ordered the

divisions of time in the vast cycle of eternity.

Happy the Christians who, without any effort, without any contention of mind embrace, through faith, all the truths that are useful to them. A revelation, miraculous to them, astonishing to all the world, has raised them to the knowledge of the primitive truths, and the most fine-spun metaphysics can go no farther. One only God who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth—a God who is served in loving him and in doing good to men—a God who has invested our conscience with a secret authority, a menacing authority, which never fails to accuse him who is guilty —a God who is ready to pardon, and permits the weak to redeem themselves by repentance.

Besides, while this revelation unfolds so clearly to Christians the divine perfections, it gives them at the same time moral precepts, the simplicity and purity of which enchant the mind, attaching to the observance of these

precepts the most magnificent rewards. All is beautifully linked together in this grand system, from the supreme intelligence to the mind of man, and from that mind, so inconceivable in its nature, so admirable in its works to the lowest degree of instinct, to that which seems scarcely superior to the motion of plants. All is beautifully linked together in this grand system; let us then perform our task and pursue our course through life, regulating our actions by the moral and religious laws which our education, our instinct, and our studies, have engraved on our hearts. Let us not strive against these laws, either from a vain spirit of dogmatizing, from a mean condescension to the derisions of a frivolous world, or from a blind subjection to the empire of our passions;—let us reflect that there is an end to that time which has been given us as an essay—to the time allotted us upon earth.

And let us not disguise the importance to man of that moment in which he distinctly

sees the approaches of death, when no other spectacle presents itself to distract his attention, when no other thought can occupy his mind. It is not then death such as he had heard it spoken of in the time of his strength, it is not that pompous death painted by the poets in their tragic scenes, that death in the midst of glory, amid the intoxication excited by the noise of drums and the cries of war—that death, in short, which makes a part of the romance of life—it is death in its insulated form in the midst of darkness, of silence, of oblivion; 'tis a terrible adieu to those we love in a voice which can no longer express its feelings, with a hand which has no longer the power to bless.

O, my God! give us to behold a consolatory ray of light beyond this gloomy picture! —Is it to be obtained by faith? we embrace it under any form prescribed by thy divine will. Alas! it is but too true that 'tis thee alone we ought to serve, but thou hast given us so many objects to love, so many varied

interests have distracted us, even from our first entrance into the world, and our reason so weak at first, our reason which experience alone can thoroughly enlighten.....Ah, pardon, O my God!—we were going to excuse ourselves—we were going to defend ourselves, and we are before a judge who knows all. Let us only pray to him, and since his goodness has given us existence, let us hope that in his mercy we shall find a last and certain resource.

XCII. SEVERITY TOWARDS ONE'S-SELF.

You are surprized that Theogenes wavers so long before he comes to a resolution. You do not know, then, that he quarrels with himself for the untowardness of events, and that his mind is tormented with remorse because his best-concerted projects have failed from circumstances in which he had himself no share. He is then mad. He is so in this respect. Ah! how many of our secret pains are never known to casual observers!

XCIII. BEING NATURAL.

No one, perhaps, ever formed a just idea of the character of Madame d'Erval, there is so much study in every thing that relates to her person, and so much chance in all the opinions and sentiments she delivers. She would appear in the world before her character was formed, and to satisfy this pretension she adjusted herself for the world so early that she never placed any reliance on what she was by nature. She has understanding and imagination, but we see art always mingled in every thing which brings them forth; according to the manner in which the business of the toilet is arranged she raises or lowers her voice for nothing, and whispers or bawls out the most common-place things.

Come, charming Amelia! you who never think of yourself, you whose character may be read the moment you are seen. All your qualities are in harmony the one with the other, and, by a happy concurrence, you have

the beauty which agrees best with your soul, and the grace which best becomes your beauty.

XCIV. PUBLIC OPINION.

A man who from the common ranks of society arrives at the supreme power, has had time and opportunity to study public opinion, and is much better acquainted with it than a prince seated upon a hereditary throne. This is an advantage to him; but then he will respect that opinion less, because brought up in the midst of his equals, he has seen its origin and progress. *Major e longinquo reverentia;* this axiom which was transmitted to us by the ancients, will apply to every thing.

XCV. AVARICE.

A nice examination of the quantity and species of reproach deserved by avaricious persons will be perhaps a novelty in its way.

They accumulate their revenues instead of

employing them in a manner favourable to industry; this is a national crime. Such is a very common accusation brought against them; the judgment is severe, and too lightly pronounced. A man, however avaricious he may be, does no political wrong to a state if he lends his money, if he puts it into circulation. The case is not the same when, through fear or from other motives, the greater part of his fortune, converted into gold or silver coin, is kept idly locked up in his coffers. This is, however, a very uncommon mania, people are deterred by their interest from this, and the evil to society is trifling in itself, since the reproduction of true riches is not stopped by a slight diminution of the circulating medium. Carrying this idea to its farthest extreme, in order to make it understood the better, I would affirm that man, to be more reprehensible, to be guilty of a greater wrong to society, who suffers a single pound of bread to be spoiled, than he who keeps a pound of gold useless and inactive.

I think, then, that when avaricious men are accused of infringing the laws of political œconomy, the reproach is extremely exaggerated. There are, however, other relations in which they may be considered, with reason, not only as bad members of the body-politic, but as bad parents and cold friends. Examine their pleasures, you will find them wholly selfish, independent of others as individuals, independent of society at large. The miser, in not expending any thing, forms to himself a picture of the various uses in which his money might be employed, and this enjoyment in imagination is sufficient for him; 'tis an enjoyment in which he may partake at his own will, which he can perpetuate in the same way, and he has never any occasion for others to be happy.—We may go still farther, and say that he derives his satisfaction from the faults of others. The affairs of such an one are deranged—such an one is ruined by his misconduct—these words are delightful to the heart of the miser, who applauds him-

self, giving to his frigid parsimony the specious names of wisdom and prudence.

We cannot restrain a movement of impatience, when we study the sentiments of an avaricious man, and think of the origin of his pleasures. We see, as we have observed above, that he is repaid for all his privations by the feeling of what he might enjoy, and perceiving him thus made happy through the medium of imagination, we are tempted to arraign this brilliant queen of our pleasures, this noble dispenser of the highest favours of nature, and ask why she, who embellishes the universe itself to our eyes, why this imagination can be emulous to extend her empire to that remote corner where dwells a sordid miser; one who, crouched by a handful of fire with a half-burning lamp, sits there the picture of famine and misery. This imagination, however, strange as it may seem, does introduce herself there under her invisible form, and, planted by the side of the sordid wretch, seduces him, and occupies his mind

entirely by presenting before it the most enchanting perspectives. What a phænomenon is this!—what is this prodigy which we cannot explain?—this succession of miracles by which the human mind is encompassed, and which form its very essence?—We cannot tell.

XCVI. THE FASHION.

The authority of fashion is of a very singular nature. The ordonnances which emanate from it are promulgated without noise, yet they are heard all the world over, and obeyed more scrupulously than laws written and published by sound of trumpet. *The fashion* is a king without guards, without a throne, without a palace, and yet is always spoken of as if it were a visible power; it is that the idea is constantly present to the mind of every body, that it governs by faith, and that it inflicts on miscreants who dare to spurn its jurisdiction, the most formidable of all punishments in the opinion of society, that of ridi-

cule. Thus, by a whimsical pre-eminence, the fashion is obeyed, although it is a master whose opinions and tastes change at every moment—it is a sovereign universally respected, though it is *the fashion* to be laughing at it continually.

XCVII. OLD AGE.

People in an advanced age should never affect habits or manners that appear in any way extraordinary. Nothing which can have the smallest influence upon the respect and consideration in which we are to be held in the world, ought to be put to the hazard, when the future can no longer be reckoned our's, when we have no longer any retaliation in our power. 'Tis to young persons alone that such sports are permitted, 'tis in them that they are passed over. But the old man, who seems always on the verge of settling his last accounts, ought not to authorize any doubts respecting his wisdom and judgment; qualities which should be the certain result of

experience, and which are the only ornament left us by time.

XCVIII. THE ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

Eternal punishment !—Power Almighty ! can they who entertain such an idea know thee ?—Eternal fire for those miserable creatures who have to resist the seductions of error and the storms of the passions !—Eternal fire for those miserable creatures who have so many combats to sustain, and are armed with such feeble weapons ! — Power Almighty ! Your goodness preceded our birth, it still subsists, it will subsist after we are cut off by the hand of death.

XCIX. SELFISHNESS.

It is a common saying, that great men are permitted to be selfish, at least that they may be pardoned if they are so. Yes, in the little things of life ; but if they are selfish in glory, as is too commonly the case, they would be

liable to great reproaches; they would destroy all distinctions on their route, and this route according to their comprehensive itinerary is infinity; for they hope to live to the most remote posterity. The man selfish in glory, if endowed with omnipotence, would strike talents and genius with sterility for ever, the very elements of them would be lost. But nature cannot be conquered thus; she says to her ungrateful son, much has been given you, but it is an honour of which I am jealous, 'tis the splendour of the world, and I cannot permit any one to snatch it from me. Let others also have the means of shining, nor seek, thou who art so richly endowed, to crush them. See those stars with which the firmament is so richly studded, they are magnificent, yet they are numberless; it is the law of my empire, and shall not be changed to please you.

C. THE GENEVESE.

The Genevese are much less superficial than the French, and yet I feel much less disposed to communication with them; one cannot perceive that any impression is made upon them; and I could not forbear saying of them, not long ago, that they reason better than the French, but the French reason more.

CI. THE GENEVESE.

It is singular, that notwithstanding the conquest of Geneva by the French, notwithstanding the incorporation of the little state into the great, they still continue to talk of the Genevese and the French. All this will undoubtedly be changed in time, but there is some honour in having resisted the change so long, in having retained the noble recollection of what we were. At the taking of Geneva by surprise, we were nevertheless told of the transports manifested by the inhabitants at becoming French, of their shouts of joy.

Such was the language of the public papers; —what materials for history do these and thousands of other public papers furnish!

CII. POLITICAL ŒCONOMY.

Poor political œconomy!—Men turn and turn in it as in running at the ring. The subjects it involves are so run into one another, that people pass and repass them over and over, without ever distinguishing either their beginning or their end.

CIII. THE TRIBUNATE.

They know not, then, that the Gracchi were tribunes—those modern orators who in pleading for the establishment of certain municipal imposts are incessantly repeating: *Tribunes! Tribunes my colleagues! My colleagues Tribunes!*—There are people who never feel themselves incommoded by a name, and who would without scruple call themselves *Cæsar*, when flying from the field of battle with the utmost speed. Every thing is matter of habit.

CIV. EXAGGERATION.

The good M. de la Houssage, who loves to make a great parade of his knowledge in political œconomy, perpetually repeats that in matters of taxation *two and two do not make four.* We might well observe to him in his quality of complimenter-general, that in complimentary speeches, in flattering observations, *two and two also do not make four;* and that exaggeration always weakens the effect it is intended to produce.

CV. OTHERS.

If we only wish to shew ourselves off to ourselves, to make ourselves admired by ourselves, we may talk to others of our ways, our performances, our pretensions, our hopes. But if we would see their features sparkle with animation, hear them talk with emphasis, see their hands flourished in the air—if we would make the puppet play, and enjoy its anticks, 'tis with their own interests, their darling vanities, that we must entertain them.

CVI. GRACE.

Taste belongs to the highest refinement of mind, but grace is still more useful, grace in the tone, in the words, in the manner; 'tis almost one of the mysteries of our nature which cannot be defined.—I would say, for my part: *See Madame de* STAEL, if this word did not risk one day attaining an age when years derange every thing.

CVII. THE SAME LANGUAGE WITH AN OPPOSITE CHARACTER.

One may oftentimes hold the same language, having a perfectly opposite character. *It is not easy to quarrel with me*, was a phrase perpetually in the mouth of the Cardinal de la Roche Aymon, which was often cited as a proof of the meanness of his character. The same language might be held by a person of a different disposition, who soars, as it were, with an eagle's flight. You neglect me, you are not exact in returning my visits, no matter, I did not pay attention to it.—But will

you not be angry, when you are told that yesterday, only yesterday, it was said of you in a large assembly, that you were extremely awkward, that you had very moderate talents, and a mind quite of an ordinary cast?—No, let them say what they please—there is me, there is you, let us judge ourselves at our ease, and according to our means.

'Tis thus that from pride, from meanness, or from an impertinent self-love, we may equally say: *It is not easy to quarrel with me.*

CVIII. OBEDIENCE.

We ought always to bear in mind that the submission of the great number to one single being is not an insulated fact. To accomplish this end in camps, military discipline has been invented, and the perfection of this science has become the completion of despotism. The ideas of greatness and majesty have been invented in civil society to accomplish the same end, and the perfecting these ideas, under favour of habits of respect, has

completed the fine system of union between order and liberty.

CIX. HEREDITARY DISTINCTIONS.

It is worth while to pay attention to a few reflections which may be offered upon the subject of hereditary distinctions. These distinctions are the great support of the monarchy, they are essential to the perpetuity of the royal family, and guarantee the continuity of the respect paid to the prince;—a continuity which is the political transmission necessary to the state, and the principal end in view in the establishment of dynasties. When this continuity is stopped or interrupted, recourse must be had to despotism to supply its place, and this experiment the reigning power never fails to make.

The superior ranks, moreover, serve as an Upper House to public opinion, and consecrate its power; instead of which, in a democracy, this opinion has no distinctive character, nothing fixed in its legislation; some-

times it is hurried away like a savage by a blind spirit of independence, sometimes it is muzzled like a slave by popular tyrants.

CX. THE OPINION OF SOCIETY.

I have seen the opinion of society sometimes abuse its power, imposing its dictates upon the ministers, and it was well. But many times I have been disposed to defy it, and I certainly should have done so, if the question had been a matter of personal strength.

CXI. REMORSE.

Alas! where is life?—is it in the present, is it in the future, is it in the past?—You cannot judge this, you whom remorse attaches entirely to one epoch, to one circumstance. 'Tis to innocent souls, and to them alone, that all periods of time belong.

CXII. THE MANNER OF OTHERS WITH US.

Words offend more than actions, the tone more than the words, the air more than the

tone. I explain this difference thus. The more calm, the more composed is the expression of the sentiments of any one towards us, the more it has the appearance of habit.

CXIII. A CONSEQUENCE.

Leaving the honours of the world out of the question, you would sooner pardon your inferiors several overt acts of rebellion, than an air of too much ease in your company.

CXIV. CIRCUMSTANCES.

The measure that we ought to concede to extraordinary circumstances is, among all political decisions, one of the most difficult; it is a delicate point to allow of any exception to old conservative principles, and we risk, in refusing a trifling act of compliance, to be compelled to make greater sacrifices.

CXV. CONJUGAL TIES.

A man of the most barren mind can always find topics of conversation with his wife, so numerous are the subjects of common interest

between them. Much more intelligence is necessary, much more imagination in the habitual intercourse with a mistress. Women of the world more especially cannot attend to any ideas but such as are half-playful; nothing belongs to them, and wherever they discover any thing like traces of reason they think they discover an enemy. This reflection in favour of marriage ought to increase the number of its partisans in large towns, where so many people, embarrassed in the midst of society, take a mistress for the ease of their lives and the convenience of their minds.

CXVI. FRAGMENT UPON METAPHYSICAL FREE-WILL.

A man of talents yesterday at my house, attacked the existence of free-will in us; and without bringing forward any new arguments upon the subject, his didactic conclusions and commanding eloquence made a considerable impression upon the company. He personified the motives of our actions, and at-

taching himself to demonstrating how these motives created or fixed all our resolutions, he concluded, that in this state of continued subjection to a regulator, free-will could not exist.

The principal error of this reasoning lies in detaching one of the parts, one of the modalities of our spiritual organization, to make of it an exterior being under the appellation of *motives*;—a being distinct from ourselves to whom all our actions, all the operations of our will are to be subjected. 'Tis, then, in reclaiming these *motives* as a portion of ourselves, as the works of our own mind that we shall resume that free-will of which some persons would fain deprive us.

It is not without us, but within us, that our wills, our opinions, our preferences are formed, and 'tis the mind which performs this grand work—this work composed of such nice shadings and such imperceptible elements that it resembles a new creation. The mind collects around it every thing by which it can

be enlightened ; recollections of the past, insight into the future, views the most distant, which compose the pictures of the imagination. It has still farther the idea of moral satisfaction, of the pleasures of the senses ; it comprehends all our being under the wide extent of its inspection : truths and illusions seem to circle about it, seem in combat before it :—'tis the mind, in short, which decrees the palm to the one or to the other.

Why are motives dwelt upon thus strenuously :— every reasonable thought has its motive, every dangerous seduction has its motive ; and when in the midst of so many movements, in the midst of the torments by which the mind is assailed, it comes at last to some decision : this resolution is evidently the last act of the thought, and not a despotic proclamation addressed to it from without to fix its doubts. Do we not see with what authority the mind examines all the motives presented to it ; how it ranges them, draws them up in a line like soldiers in a field of

battle, the better to know them and distinguish between them; or how in other moments it makes them appear one by one before its tribunal, when it perhaps first listens to one favourably, then disgraces it, then recalls it; and often a motive which is drawn by it from obscurity, which is rescued by it from oblivion, triumphs over all the others. Yet, 'tis this sovereign, this mind, this sovereign in every way, which the advocates of motives would, by a little art of reasoning, transform into the slave of its own last decision. This is to substitute the most miserable of suppositions to the magnificent system of power and free-will, of which every sentiment of the mind gives us the idea.

Certainly if there is something within us superior to thought, it is not a motive placed in authority by the decisions of the schools—it is not one of the modalities without end which the mind discovers, but it is *myself*, that mysterious, that incomprehensible being of whom thought seems only the agent, whose

happiness 'tis the mission of thought to promote by its cares and by its researches.

This *myself*, the centre of our existence, is susceptible of pains and pleasures; and these pains, these pleasures we owe to the impressions made on the senses with which we are endowed, and to our moral perceptions, the productive sources of so many cares, of so many hopes. 'Tis to this *myself* that the passions address themselves; 'tis by this *myself* that reason makes its language understood; 'tis he alone who decides on all questions interesting to his happiness. Yet, though the supreme decision is his, he seems to let thought act without him, and only to concern himself with the end at which it aims.

It should seem that there is in us two faculties constituting our free-will. The one appertaining entirely to the being *myself*, the sovereign of our organization, the master of the house: the other to thought—to that thought which, in the details of every species of research or composition, seems to be moved

by causes independent of its sovereign *myself*. Thus the painter in guiding his pencil, the poet in arranging his harmonious verses, the man of science in pursuing, within his laboratory, the hidden secrets of nature, seem to have a freedom of action which belongs to them entirely. But the *myself* is there, who enjoys the prospects of glory and fortune that the labours of thought promise him, or of which they give him hopes ; and if he sees that these labours are nugatory, he commands thought to turn into another route.

It should seem, however, as if there were a station above this *myself*, who deliberates only and guides the action of thought, for a still superior authority. Yet, if men attempt to consider from on high their spiritual power —to undertake, placing themselves through observation above thought, and, if we may thus express ourselves, above that *myself*, whose conscience is in their power—they are soon made to feel the inutility of the attempt; and if they persisted they would sink into a

sort of annihilation. It is that such a station as that to which we would mount belongs to God alone, or to the celestial spirits endowed with a portion of his power. But these are mysteries upon mysteries; it were better, therefore, in studying the metaphysics of our moral organization, to stop at those observations upon the mind which are approved and confirmed by an innate sentiment. And what is this sentiment in metaphysics?—it is a light even more penetrating than the light of the mind, and which seems rather referable to the conceptions of our simple faculties, such as thought, free-will, choice, and the obedience of our physical to the commands of our moral nature.

Is there any thing more miserable than seeking to degrade this sublime system, to abridge this immense conception, by creating modalities never to be ended, which, under the name of *motives*, are to be our masters, and our absolute masters. This hypothesis, altogether fantastic, is more absurd than the

hypothesis of atoms diffused over all space to explain *a priori* the ordonnance of the universe. For we can conceive, at least, these atoms by breaking in pieces, in imagination, every thing that exists; but the term *motives* expresses only an idea, 'tis a word invented to explain the action of the mind, and to give more distinct notions of it; these *motives* are not, however, the less, as we have observed, the work of the mind, and without that mind, without the faculty of thinking, of examining, and of choosing, what is meant by a motive cannot be conceived; at the same time that we can conceive the atoms by means of our understanding, independently of the existence of the harmonious worlds which compose the universe.

But let us have done with these sophisms of the schools, and the abuses they display of the art of reasoning;—of that art which, in setting itself up against the mind of man, sets itself up against the Creator. For this art is our work, while our spiritual magnificence is

anterior to ourselves, anterior to our labours, anterior to our powers, anterior to sentiment itself. Ah! as long as the gates of that interior temple which we call our moral organization shall not be opened to us, let us believe, upon the faith of our intellectual senses, that these words, ancient as the world itself, *thought*, *liberty*, *will*, *myself*, are significant terms, invented to express the principal characteristics of our divine essence.

And what prettiness of invention, like the sports of children, do we impute to the Supreme Being, in substituting an uniform mechanism to the grand idea of free-will!—of free-will united with intelligence. Where would then be the end of the creation, the end of the order and magnificence that reigns in the world?

Let us, in concluding, go still farther. If I admit in hypothesis the metaphysical system of *superior motives* which I have just explained, I do not then see how any free-will can exist throughout the universe, how

it can be an attribute even of the Supreme Being himself;—for the resolutions of the Sovereign of worlds must be preceded by *motives* like the resolutions of man. Yes, undoubtedly there must be motives for all actions—'tis even an indispensable requisite to free-will; but these motives are an operation of the mind, not the constrained result of some power independent of ourselves. A terrible system, which would destroy all ideas of honour and glory in the social world, and which, in a more extended view, in our relations with the Deity, would annihilate our emulation, our merit, and our hopes.

SKETCH OF THOUGHTS.*

I. ON MATERIALISM.

What good can be derived to us from those writings which are intended to prove the materiality of the soul ?† None of us, when we

* The *Thoughts* here presented are extracted from notes left by my father, none of which were copied out or arranged in any order. He had written with his own hand at the head of these and many others, which I do not publish at present, the title I have preserved: *Sketch of Thoughts.* It was, therefore, a subject of hesitation with me whether or not I should publish them; yet since these notes, written for his own use, may serve to convey a more intimate knowledge of the view he took of many subjects, I at length determined to give some of them to the world, in the state he left them.—*Note by Madame de Staël.*

† My father had written at the head of these reflections: *An article not completed; I must read the work of Cabanis again. These are only simple notions which I write down in the mean time, that I may be able to recall them.* —In fact, though his opinions were in entire opposition to those of the Senator Cabanis, he had been singularly struck with the energetic talents of this writer, and justly considered him as the adversary who, of all others, merited

talk of the soul, can know it but by its effects, for its essenceis inscrutable to mortal understandings; it is to distinguish intelligence from objects of the senses, from what we see, we hear, we touch, that we have adopted the term MIND. 'Tis solely from the impressions made upon the soul by our physical sensations that the idea of its being material can arise. But these impressions are derived from some peculiar property in each, they are not occasioned by two bodies that touch; we see in the physical world properties of this kind which have a power of acting upon each other without touching, and we may easily imagine, in the same way, a spiritual property, which commands our bodies by a power unknown and unperceived. Neither can I accede to those arguments in favour of materialism which are drawn from the influence of corporeal diseases upon the mind—'tis the harpsichord which is deranged.

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the most attention and reflection.—*Note by Madame de Staël.*

What instrument is there which could inspire one sensible word, or awaken a single recollection? a recollection which, moreover, may afterwards be consigned to oblivion. We have but two great leading words to employ in these sort of inquiries, *mind* and *matter*, and to explain common ideas we have many synonymes.

II. HEREDITARY SUCCESSION.

It might be said that there is a secret instinct in political arrangements, and that study confirms what instinct has produced. Take hereditary succession as an instance of this, one of the first innate ideas in the mind of man, and one of the last in reflection.

III. THE MYSTERY OF ONE'S-SELF.

Man vainly endeavours to unravel the secret of his intellectual organization; he would, as it were, hear his thoughts.

IV. REGRETS.

How unhappy is that man whose heart cannot be melted by regrets!—it seems as if a gate of brass were shut against him when he would recall a beloved image.

V. ENVY.

People are much less envious of regulated superiority than of arbitrary gifts.

VI. FAMILIARITY.

There are people who talk of *our Montesquieu*, *our Pascal*—I do not like such familiarity with such kind of men.

VII. THE THIRST OF GLORY.

We have only to take a survey of what remains of great men to check our ambition.

VIII. JOKING.

You know, madam, said Dorval, how much I love joking; I am even thought to under-

stand it a little. Do you know that the good Sterheim is a man of great wit, I can assure you he is;—we have often said excellent things together on the subject of joking—we have——You have talked only, sir, but joking implies the utmost refinement of wit.

IX. SUSCEPTIBILITY.

We lower ourselves in taking offence too hastily.

X. THE IMAGINATION.

There must be a conductor to the electric fluid—one is equally wanted to the ætherial flame of the imagination.

XI. A WELL-WRITTEN LETTER.

You have, you say, written eight pages to the Prince to exculpate yourself from some fault which you are accused of having committed towards him in a hunting party, and you could not succeed in calming his anger, while one of your companions was guilty of

a much greater fault, and he repaired it entirely by a much shorter letter, and one not near so well reasoned ;—here they are both, read them.—I have read them, you are certainly in the right, yet I am not surprised at the result.—Explain yourself.—It is easy; only see these four lines which conclude the letter of your friend.—Well! they have nothing to do with the affair.—True, but they have a great deal to do with the man who is to judge it—with the Prince.

XII. FOREIGN TRAVEL.

The interdict imposed for a long time by the Emperors of Russia upon their subjects travelling into foreign countries has been considered as a sort of feodal barbarism. The present Emperor, animated by more liberal sentiments, has taken off this interdict, and great numbers of Russians at present leave their own country to travel about Europe, remaining even for a long time in some of

the countries they visit. Perhaps, after having restrained them unreasonably in this respect, and in a manner incompatible with the ideas of the present times, there is now somewhat of excess in the liberty granted. In a country such as Russia, wanting in so many of the necessaries of life, and which cannot be sure that it may always have the means of procuring them in exchange for its wood and hemp, a watchful eye ought to be kept over the money spent by travellers in foreign countries. This should the rather be done since its territorial fortunes are vested by estates of immense extent in the hands of lords, a small number of whom would expend in themselves a considerable portion of the territorial revenues of the empire in foreign countries, if they are allowed to travel without any restraint on the part of the sovereign. These immense properties vested in single hands are circumstances which require exceptions in the general right that a man has to do what he will with his own. I must think,

therefore, that in an empire where, by a double combination, this concentration of riches exists, while the country itself labours under great disadvantages in a commercial point of view, it is proper that some bounds should be set to the indefinite liberty of living for a long time in foreign lands.

XIII. PUBLIC OPINION.

There can be no public opinion without distinction of classes. Opinion is the result of a choice between ideas, and in order to make this choice there must be a choice of persons.

XIV. TRICKS OF SATIRISTS.

'Tis a very common trick among satirists who wish not to commit themselves, to ascribe the severe things they say to some well-known person of talents; they make use of his name as an instrument of their rancour.

XV. OLD MEN.

They ought never to make use of the word *delicious;* it is not suited to their age.

XVI. A RISK.

'Tis a great risk to think of paying every thing by friendship without praises.

XVII. AVIDITY.

When the love of money gains too much power over our minds, we should examine well what money can do for us; it seems to me that this investigation ought to cool it.

XVIII. THE REVOLUTION.

The Revolution has increased the quantity of talent in France;—there are more people who have a little.

XIX. A WORK.

It must be the public that judges a work. 'Tis very probable that among the circle in

which you move, there may not be one person of an ardent mind—one person of sound understanding; besides, that fear of giving offence commonly dictates the opinion delivered by families or by coteries.

XX. THE PIT AT THE THEATRE.

The pit is often composed of men who, each taken separately, would not dare to hazard an opinion; when collected together they embolden each other, and commonly pass a very correct judgment.

XXI. THE VAGUE.

Beware of attempting to prove what is not susceptible of perfect demonstration;—the vague is much better.

XXII. A CUSTOM AT GENEVA.

There is a charming custom at Geneva, that the husband takes the name of his wife. What an admirable invention is a woman!

ESSAY

UPON

CORN LAWS, AND THE CORN TRADE.

THE legislator ought to seek the truth. Impressed with a holy awe in contemplating the good which he may do, and which he dares to attempt, he ought to raise himself, by profound reflection above the different motives which put society in action. He ought to consider society in its greatest extent, and combine together in his benevolent views those classes of citizens which are separated by pride and idle pretensions;—he ought, above all, to be the protector of that multitude of human beings who have no orators through whose organs to prefer their complaints;—whose sufferings should the rather be his study because their voice is never raised but

in the hour of distress ;—who, seeing nothing but the present moment, cannot be served except by means of a prudent foresight;—whose situation is such that it is impossible to confer benefits upon them in a way that they shall be sensible to the good, or that the endeavours to that effect shall be repaid with their gratitude ;—yet whom it is so gratifying to defend against oppression and misfortunes, though without the hope of fame or reward.

In the first place, can any fair comparison be made, whether in morals or in sentiment, between a thousand citizens who actually exist and are perishing, and a hundred thousand, the generation of whom is only in preparation ?—'Tis man who is susceptible of happiness, and who suffers, who adheres to life, yet is obliged to renounce it : 'tis he who is my like ; 'tis with him that I have engaged in a compact ; 'tis for him that laws are made. Those laws do not oblige him to multiply his species on earth, but they inflict

death on him who gives it; nor can I understand in any way that cold compassion towards future generations which closes our hearts against the cries of a thousand sufferers by whom we are surrounded.

But to take another view of this singular mode of calculating.—Supposing even that we could not be permitted to discuss the question except with the precision required in sciences the most exactly defined;—supposing even that the present and future generations of mankind were to stand for no more in the calculation than the × in Algebra, still the proposition advanced by so many people would be false. For not alone are the thousand men who perish by the dearness of corn to be brought into comparison with the future increase of population, to this actual loss of a thousand must be added the calamities of ten millions besides, who escape death but in passing through the severest sufferings: we must think of the sorrows of such a number subjected, as spectators, to all the anguish

of compassion, and living in a state of alarm amidst a society agitated by the dearness or scarcity of the first article of life.

Of all the different sorts of encouragement agriculture is susceptible of receiving, that which results from an increase of price in an article of primary necessity is incontrovertibly the least expedient; it is an encouragement which cannot have place but at the expense of the general good, and the general tranquillity: it is an encouragement like an enormous and rigorous capitation tax, imposed for the moment on all the labouring class for the benefit of the great landed proprietors. Nor does the evil stop here; the mode in question would be less objectionable, the bounds of it being known, and that the abuse must cease by its becoming so manifest: but when the proprietors raise the price of corn and forbid an increase of the labourer's wages, a sort of strife is established between these two classes of society—in the dark, indeed, but terrible—where the number of suf-

ferers cannot be calculated; where, under shelter of the laws, the strong oppress the weak; where the man of property, by the weight of his prerogatives, crushes the man who lives by the labour of his hands.

When bread is at a moderate price, the artisan can maintain his family and lay by something as a resource in case of illness; if the price is advanced so as to be felt, he is constrained to forego this very desirable saving; perhaps even the quantity of food that can be furnished to his family is necessarily diminished: he must either be deaf to their cries or deprive himself of a part of the nourishment necessary to maintain his own strength. In short, in proportion as the price of bread increases, the sway of the landed proprietor is extended; for the moment that the labourer or mechanic has no longer the means of saving, that moment they can no longer in any point dispute his will: they must work to-day that they may not die to-morrow; for in this contest between the proprietor and the workman, one brings into play his own life and that of

his family, while the other only stakes some little retrenchment in his accustomed luxuries.

Let us here recapitulate the march of this advance in price with its effect upon the fixed expenses of the sovereign, and upon the taxes:

1. An increase in the price of all commodities, and of manual labour.

2. A momentary advantage to the proprietor of the commodities, and to the labouring class, upon that portion of their revenue allotted to the payment of taxes.

3. Suffering to all persons with fixed incomes; to those who have pensions, to soldiers, to sailors, and to every description of persons engaged in the service of the state upon an established stipend.

4. Necessity on the part of the sovereign to increase the pay of these people.

5. Exhaustion of the treasury from this increase of expenditure.

6. Necessity of the increase of taxes to supply this deficiency.

7. From the effect of these new taxes anni-

hilation of the momentary advantage derived by the proprietors and the labouring class from the increased price of the commodities and of manual labour.

It is very common in questions of political economy to carry truths to the utmost extremity, in order to transform them into errors. There is scarcely any one which can stand this trial, and the reason is very obvious. All questions of commerce hold to certain relations, and these relations are themselves founded upon circumstances ordered by nature, and which cannot, therefore, admit any great deviation from them. For instance, we may pronounce affirmatively, that it is conformable with the interests of the state to prohibit all productions of foreign industry; for if we compare the fertility of the soil of France with that of other countries, and the intelligence of the inhabitants with that of other men, we shall soon see the bounds of what foreign industry, carried to the utmost degree of which it is capable, can offer us;

it will then be evident, that this economy cannot compensate the sacrifices of population and of money to which such a commerce would expose the kingdom. But supposing that by some miracle the nature of the soil and of the inhabitants should on a sudden, in any one nation of Europe, undergo such a change as that it could give a thousand ells of stuff for two measures of corn,* our reasoning would then be changed with this great convulsion in the world.

The man who is born without any other resource than his own strength, is obliged to devote that strength to the use of the proprietor, even from the first moment when it is sufficiently developed to be so employed; and this must be continued during the whole course of his life—daily from sun-rise to the instant when, worn down with exertion, he can go on no longer till his powers have been renewed again with sleep.

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* A measure of corn contains twelve bushels.

It is a grand idea of a sovereign that he should watch over the afflictions of his people in proportion to the impotence of their complainings, and to the facility he has of oppressing them.

What! shall the representative of society be endowed with the power of compelling his people to expose their lives in the defence of the state?—shall he constrain them to come and extinguish the fire which threatens the houses of the rich, and shall he not watch over the means of their subsistence?—shall he not establish laws which will secure it?—shall he not fear a deviation from their ordinary prices?—shall he not, if possible, prevent it?—shall he not moderate the exactions of men of large property towards the indigent; the oppressions of the strong against the weak?

A great distrust ought to be entertained of general terms;—the more extended is their sense, the more easy it is to be led into error by them, because we cannot resolve where to

fix our exception. Nay, even if this be perceived, still we are apt to follow them, so much do we class all our ideas under simple relations, so much do we love to find repose by the side of exertion, so easy is it to make proselytes when we can promise them, that by the assistance of two or three principles, they shall be initiated into an understanding of subjects the most abstract. But the social architecture rejects this unity of means, this simplicity of conception so precious to our indolence.

At the same time that ideas the most dear to man are attached to the words *liberty* and *property*, 'tis to the abuse of these words that some of our greatest misfortunes may be attributed.

To secure your property during peace and during war, society only asks of you the preference in the exchange you are constrained to make of the superfluous productions of your land against labour, and this you refuse. Is your title to that land, then, derived from heaven?

Have you brought it from some neighbouring planet, and can you carry it thither again?—What powers, what privileges have you which you do not hold from society?—All you enjoy is from the effect of a general convention; and that which authorises the proprietor to dispose at his will of those articles of necessity which are superfluous to him, may well demand that purchasers of their own country should have the preference over foreign ones. This restriction is not a violation of the law of property, it is a clause, like many others in the social compact, which places bounds to the concessions and prerogatives, for the general good.

If society makes laws which wholly lock up the commodities, or unreasonably debase their prices, it is much in the wrong; but in not permitting the constant exportation of corn, in not subjecting public order to the blind caprices of liberty it acts wisely; nor will the proprietors suspend the cultivation of their lands because it may sometimes

happen to them that they shall only be allowed to sell the products to a nation consisting of four-and-twenty millions of people, and have for their market only a kingdom containing twenty-seven thousand square leagues, with some colonies.

Every thing is distorted by exaggeration. Men begin by confounding first the importance of the proprietor of the land, a function very easily filled, with the importance of the land itself; then the undefinable desires of this proprietor, which interest nobody but himself, with the means by which they may be satisfied which interest society at large. After thus confounding matters, the most trifling fancy of a proprietor is erected into a public idol to which all are commanded to bow down in the respected name of agriculture. 'Tis thus that the first step in reasoning, which deviates ever so little from the paths of truth, leads into great errors, and these are increased in proportion as its influence is extended, and consequences are

chained to consequences. I am, then, reminded of children, who with their eyes blindfolded advance towards one point, when the moment they depart, though but the breadth of a hair from the strait line which would lead them right, at every step afterwards taken deviate from it still more and more.

There is nothing complete or absolute in the greater part of the principles which can be laid down. Liberty, property, trade, high-prices, money, agriculture, and many other words used as rallying points, to which mankind would submit all combinations of social and political economy, all require equally to be restrained within just limits. Good and evil, truth and error, depend on the degree of wisdom or exaggeration which we give to our ideas; and since a single term can never express all these modifications and shadings, whenever we take upon ourselves to defend a word or a principle exclusively, we run a great hazard of deceiving ourselves and overshooting our aim. This mode of proceeding should be left to

men who, having the desire to be great and the confidence that they are so, without possessing any of the requisite power, would fain, without giving themselves any trouble or incurring any fatigue, hold in their hands the reins of the world.

In pretending to prove that the liberty of exporting corn at all times is the best system, by shewing that a constant prohibition of the exportation has its inconveniences, much the same absurdity is committed as if a man would seek to demonstrate, that white must be the most agreeable of all colours because black is the most melancholy.

Nothing announces more strongly the infancy of our ideas than this manner of arguing. Men must necessarily at first have separated all the truths upon which they were led to meditate by some strongly marked boundaries; but in proportion as their minds became more matured, as they became more penetrating and more flexible, the subjects of their observation were multiplied, and their readiness at

making distinctions among them increased; then did they observe great differences where before they had seen nothing but conformities, and relations where they had only seen contrasts. It was to express these new discoveries and not to favour weakness that measured expressions first introduced themselves.

Public opinion is stronger and more enlightened than the law. It is stronger because it is present every where, that it exercises its empire in society, and even in the bosoms of private families; it is more enlightened, because if the law be the work of one man alone, who may have deceived himself, opinion is the result of the thoughts of nations and of ages. This superiority of public opinion is especially manifested in a monarchical state, because the members who compose the society not having any share in making those combinations upon which the laws are founded, carry all their powers to the side of opinion, making it, as it were, the

representative of their thoughts and wishes. Thus they raise a tribunal which we are constrained to respect, though unsupported by soldiers or civil officers, because it rules with sovereign sway over the two great springs by which civilized society is moved—consideration and contempt.

Indignation once excited by speculations contrary to the national interest is perpetuated in the public opinion. From a sentiment founded originally in reason, arises afterwards an unjust sentiment, such as that which throws opprobrium upon the corn-trade in general, while this trade is often extremely useful to society. But how exact from passions and prejudices a discrimination which often escapes the tranquil meditation of men the most capable of thinking and reflecting!—A sensible line of demarcation between the liberty and the abuse of it ought to be established, not only in the theory, but in the practice of the corn-trade. Without such a precaution this trade will never receive its

laws but from public opinion, and this opinion will confound what ought to be distinguished. For its power, so often salutary, has also its inconveniences; it is rare that its decrees are formed with moderation; it is rare that it stops where it ought to stop; the impulse requisite for it to become a power, and resist the obstacles by which it is opposed, almost always carry it beyond the mark; its vehemence must serve as its support, and its exaggeration must give it publicity. But thus does its effect surpass its intentions; it would only attack avarice, and it throws a ridicule upon economy; it would only do honour to frankness, and it renders circumspection suspected; it would only blast meanness, and it casts a tarnish over prudence; it would only decry monopoly, and it diffuses odium upon the trade itself. We might almost say, that public opinion can only act by its excess, that it is like those terrible winds of the North which purify the air solely through their violence and impetuosity.

The propensity of every description of persons is to generalize their class ;—the proprietors thus finish by persuading themselves that they alone compose the state.

This disposition to extend the circle to which we belong applies to every kind of object, and may be continually observed. If a man be wholly disposed to meditation, he composes the universe of beings like himself; every man, according to his ideas, meditates deeply ;—he whose attention is fixed upon the earth, believes man the sole citizen of it, and reckons as nothing the number of beings capable of feeling happiness and misery whose forms differ from his own ;—nay, in concentrating his regards upon human nature alone, he considers his own colour as the privileged class—the white man as the master, the black as the slave. In the interior of every society the same spirit is to be observed ;—the noble, the rich man, the warrior, the magistrate—each extends his own circle and that of the calling to which he belongs : thus are errors

multiplied indefinitely; they believe in gradation that the country was made for towns, towns for courts, empires for sovereigns, and the proprietors celebrate, with the utmost sincerity, in the name of the public good, laws made for themselves alone.

It would appear, that the legislator had a confused feeling, that leaving the corn-trade wholly free would have both its advantages and disadvantages; but that he could not settle precisely in his mind the point at which the utility of this freedom would end, and the abuse of it begin. This uncertainty must necessarily lead to imperfect precautions; and tolerance being superseded by exaggeration, called, in a deadened voice, upon public opinion to fix those barriers which the law had not dared to establish.

This spirit in legislation is much more timid than wise: it is to discourage and permit, to excite and restrain. If public opinion be reasonable, the law should conform to it; if it be adverse to the good of society it ought

not to be strengthened, or even permitted. Doubt, uncertainty, and apprehension ought to agitate the mind of the legislator; but it is only when this agitation is calmed by the discovery of truth, and the assurance of its being really discovered, that the law should be framed; for the law should be clear and positive, as should be the obedience paid to it.

Uncertainty with regard to their rights, a feeling of injustice, the appearance of partiality, cherish a constant source of asperity which might easily be forbidden to flow by abolishing all arbitrary institutions not absolutely commanded by necessity. The subalterns, to whom the different gradations of authority are confided, feel so much gratification in commanding, that too much distrust of their levity and imprudence cannot be shewn; but, in order to arrive at a thorough knowledge of all the inconveniences arising from this source, the attention must not be confined solely to the number of abuses; the

extent of the uneasiness created by all the acts of power, the principles of which are not well known, must also be taken into the calculation. Thus the *taille*, the *corvée*, the militia, are in themselves sources of great uneasiness, and great caution should be observed in the administration of such institutions; nothing should be confided to the capricious will of mankind, but what it is the intention to consign to the empire of chance; and nothing should be left to chance but what we would increase and multiply through the powers of imagination and the influence of hope. Thus that people would be the most happy who should never know arbitrary power but by acts of beneficence; for then the less they comprehended that power, the less they would know its march and its means; and, abandoned to their imagination, the more would their happiness be increased.

If there were constantly at the head of the administration a man whose comprehensive genius could always extend itself to all pos-

sible circumstances, whose flexible and unctuous mind could always conform to them his will and his purposes ;—who, endowed with a soul full of ardour, yet calm and tranquil in his reasonings, was passionately devoted to the wish of doing good, yet discreet in the choice of his means ;—who, full of integrity and understanding in judging the rights of the different classes of society knew how to hold with a firm and steady hand the balance in which was to be weighed the pretensions of each ;—who, forming to himself just ideas respecting the public prosperity, endeavoured to uphold it without performing any act with precipitation ;—who, considering the passions of mankind as a natural fruit of the soil, should proportion his acts to this eternal law of Nature, not forming to himself ideas of perfection in man any farther than to excite his own courage, and not to be irritated or thrown into despondency by the obstacles he may encounter ;—to such a man, society might say with prudence—" We pre-

fer the constant operation of your enlightened mind to the permanence of the law; observe our wants, observe the produce of our harvests, examine what may be for our good, both within and without doors, permit, forbid, modify, the exportation of our corn, according to the abundance or scarcity of the year, according to the laws and wants of other nations, according to the state of foreign and domestic politics, according to our character. Consider with care, pronounce with wisdom, and since it is beyond the power of man to fix circumstances which nature has made vacillating, let the law which emanates from your observations be renewed every year, so that it may be always regulated according to our wants, and always conduce to our happiness."

But what a refuge against the imperfection of a permanent law is the imperfection of human nature! What a chimerical system is that which would have no force but inasmuch as the most enlightened understanding, the

highest virtue should be the constant portion of those by whom we are governed! If the conditions we have required were faithfully discharged what a burden falls upon the individual! What courage would it not require in him, if he has nothing but the resources of his own mind to oppose against numberless inconveniences constantly springing up! If he must take upon himself the course of events and become the guarantee of every thing in the public opinion, while the most important circumstances on which they depend are wholly out of his power, while he has for his judges a blind and ferocious multitude, who always impute their unhappiness to the person in power, without ever turning their reflections to the laws of nature and the inconveniences inseparable from social harmony!—Ah! if there existed an administrator capable of varying continually the laws with respect to corn, in a manner conformable to the good of the state, without being deterred by the formidable nature of

the enterprize, we should perhaps owe it to his virtues to preserve him from such a rock.

He who should write upon this subject only to gratify his own vanity would confine his efforts to shewing merely the inconveniences attendant upon perfect freedom in the corn-trade, and with displaying the insufficiency and the dangerous nature of the principles on which it is founded. He would leave in obscurity, whether or not he could point out the means which might prevent the abuses he has portrayed, whether amid so many difficulties and intricacies, a straight and certain road might be pointed out. But when we cast our eyes over the vast subjects included in political economy, when we reflect upon those which seem to belong the most essentially to the happiness of man, the gratification of our own vanity, any calculations upon our own petty fame and honour appear so despicable that we ought to blush at the idea of making the least sacrifice to

them. 'Tis not, then, to pusillanimous counsels that we would yield obedience, 'tis to the desire, to the enchanting hope of being useful we are emulous to abandon ourselves.

There are quacks in all sciences, and in all projects, who think they can persuade us of the clearness of their ideas by the simplicity of their means, and the grandeur of their views by the vastness of their resources. Sometimes, even, the more wavering they are in their designs, in their judgment, in their courage, in their knowledge, the more do they affect steadiness and confidence; tormented by the consciousness of their weakness, the more do they seek to impose on others, and to deceive themselves.

If they are alarmed at the labours of an Aristotle or a Buffon, the effects of nature are all submitted to two or three general combinations, and the various modifications are rejected with the confidence of men who have studied them all. If they are incapable of under-

standing the anatomy of the human body, and of attaching an eye of deep observation upon the different diseases to which it is subjected, an elixir is proposed which is adapted to the cure of all. If they have no opinions of their own in society, they only raise their voices the higher when they pronounce decidedly one which they have borrowed. If they understand nothing of the thousand difficulties and embarrassments belonging to the system of the public finances, they recommend an issue of paper money, or one general tax. If they are overpowered by the study of the abstract principles of political economy, they preach absolute liberty or absolute restraint.

With the assistance of this art, invented by ambitious vanity, an air of grandeur is sometimes given to their ideas, which imposes upon the world. But, more than any other subject, on that of the corn-trade should we arm ourselves against this dazzling weak-

ness. We must either renounce the idea of occupying ourselves with the welfare of the people, we must cease to talk of interesting ourselves in the maintenance of the internal tranquillity and prosperity of the state, or we must fix our resting-place in the medium between these two extremes—*constant prohibition, and constant liberty.*

Language, which only expresses with energy simple notions and striking subjects, and the indolence of thought, which is apt to rest contented under these shackles, are so many obstacles which must be conquered in treating this great question. But how much soever we know that mankind have a distaste for all ideas represented by these words, *excepting*, *so far*, *sometimes*, and many other expressions equally tarnished and discoloured, presenting nothing attractive to the attention, we must dare to set glory aside, and adhere to these restrained ideas, when we think that the highest interests of a nation may depend

upon them: and above all, when we feel from the bottom of our hearts that they alone are images of the truth.

'Tis a fine idea to assemble all the men of talents in a country to the discussion of useful truths, and 'tis a sign of greatness to permit it; but let those who present themselves at this noble assembly constantly bear in mind, that there are truths which may be changed into errors according to the manner in which they are studied. All which belong to political economy, which relate to the administration of the government, are particularly liable to be thus travestied;—they are composed of a multiplicity of rays, the power and action of which we cannot know but in collecting them together into a focus through the medium of meditation and reflection. But the art of the sophist is a prism which separates and decomposes them; whenever it is employed he can multiply errors and contradictions at his will; he can easily impress upon the scattered portions of one grand

whole whatever character and form he chuses to give them.

The benevolence of sovereigns does not rest upon their justice alone; it depends upon their talents, upon their prudence, upon the extent of illumination which they possess; upon their constant vigilance, their tender anxiety, and those paternal cares which the strict law of justice does not prescribe, but which are impressed in letters of fire upon every soul anxious to promote the happiness of mankind. Oh you who govern! never forget that the great mass of mankind were not called upon to assist in framing the laws; that, condemned to perpetual labour, they cannot participate in the intellectual light which shines around them; that their weakness, their forsaken situation calls for your incessant care and guardianship. Those who have a share in the property of the soil demand of you only liberty and justice, those who have nothing have claims on your humanity, your compassion; they demand laws

which shall temper towards them the power given by property. And since the obtaining mere necessaries is the utmost good to which they aspire, since the means of obtaining them is the sole object which occupies their thoughts, 'tis, above all, by the wisdom of your laws with regard to corn that you will best promote their happiness and repose.

Moderation is the most essential quality of every wise administration, and of all durable laws with regard to matters of subsistence.

I know not whether this moderation will succeed equally well in matters of opinion. What sentiment has taught us to hate the mind proscribes, and in following the footsteps of truth without overtaking it, in conforming ourselves to her serpentine route, perhaps no one may be pleased. Excess is generally necessary to draw others after us—we must wear a white plume to be followed; men love to class all opinions under some rallying word, and 'tis this word which attaches them, or drives them away. But can we really love

truth, and yet bend our minds to such policy? Of all the sacrifices of our opinions which can be offered, that made to the public voice is undoubtedly the meanest, since it is unattended with any kind of danger.

THE

FATAL CONSEQUENCES

OF A

SINGLE FAULT.

PREFACE

BY

MADAME DE STAEL.

"IN a conversation, occasioned by the novel of Delphine, it was remarked, that conjugal affection was a subject no less proper than the more imperious passion of love, to produce interesting situations, and to form the basis of an affecting tragedy. This opinion being warmly contested, the result of the argument was a sort of literary challenge, to which the following tale, unhappily founded in fact, owes its existence."

The foregoing paragraph was written by my father, as an introduction to this little tale, which he then intended to publish in a literary journal. The design was afterwards relinquished. In revising his manuscripts, however, I was strongly impressed

with the conviction, that it would be injustice to his memory to withhold from the world what was not only admirable in itself, but singularly interesting as a rare and precious relic of the extraordinary author.

It would ill become me to point out the moral application of any work from the pen of M. Necker; but I must be permitted to observe that the disastrous effects of negligence and inattention to private affairs in "the Fatal Consequences of a Single Fault," are exemplified with a strength and fidelity I have never seen equalled in any other production.

It is usual to find, in novels of a moral cast, perfect characters contrasted with atrocious villains, and gigantic vice opposed to chimerical, if not fantastic excellence. It follows, as a natural consequence, that such writings are wholly useless to the only class of readers to whom they might suggest caution or instruction—namely, to those who, though amiably weak, are not radically depraved, and who are rather their own enemies,

than the enemies of virtue. It should ever be the aim of that writer who aspires to the praise of usefulness, to create a salutary terror for those approaches to evil, those indications of feebleness and frailty, by which the amiable may be seduced to the commission of crimes, and the naturally upright heart perverted to falsehood and injustice.

It is only to mixed characters that such lessons can be profitable and instructive. The radically vicious are scarcely to be considered within the pale of humanity, and share so little in the common sympathies of nature, that, whatever the admonitions, whatever the examples addressed to them, they must still remain impenetrable to conviction. In their hopes and fears, their language and sentiments, they belong to another order of beings, and are incapable of receiving any impressions which are not enforced by positive sufferings and personal experience.

It is almost superfluous to remind the reader, that a dramatic author is not identified

with the personages whom he represents, and that his morality is not more to be impugned, when he traces the inevitable consequences of error or frailty, than when he illustrates the efficacy of virtuous principles, and assigns to honourable actions their proper recompense.

In the present state of literature and knowledge in Europe, it is almost ridiculous to recommend ideas generally admitted, or to enforce truisms which cannot be contested. But in France, where the spirit of party, though apparently repressed, continues to vent itself in the narrow track of literature, it is not unnecessary to anticipate and to obviate objections, however trivial or untenable, which might otherwise be made subservient to invidious remark and unwarranted misrepresentation.

THE

FATAL CONSEQUENCES

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SINGLE FAULT.

IT was the fate of Eliza Lesly to become an orphan in the tender years of childhood. But the loss of both parents was well supplied by a maternal aunt, a woman universally respected, who resided in the country, and devoted herself with unremitted assiduity to the education of her adopted daughter.

Though descended from honourable ancestors, Miss Lesly inherited but a small property, and her slender income was wholly expended in procuring masters for the various accomplishments suited to her sex and station, and in cultivating those superior talents

which embellish society and extend the sphere of existence. From nature she had received much that cannot be bestowed by art; and as she approached maturity the external charms of symmetry and elegance were heightened by that indefinable, enchanting mental grace, which, as it implies the possession of taste and delicacy, is often more fascinating than the most perfect beauty. With so many attractions it was impossible not to engage admiration; but the homage which Miss Lesly had been accustomed to receive, she soon learnt to neglect. In the distinctions so flattering to vanity she found nothing to satisfy that susceptible heart which secretly cherished the endearing image of domestic union. She aspired to the privilege of dispensing happiness to some virtuous being worthy of her esteem, her confidence, her love; capable of sympathizing in her sentiments and of recompensing her devoted attachment.

Miss Lesly had scarcely attained her

twentieth year, when Sir Henry Sommers, a young man just returned from his travels, who, by the demise of his father, had lately come into possession of a title and estate, arrived at his seat in Kent, in the vicinity of the village where the aunt of Miss Lesly resided. The return of the young baronet after a long interval of absence was an event of no small importance to the neighbourhood, and afforded to the curious and the idle ample matter for inquiry and speculation. That such a man must marry was obviously a thing of course: that the object of his choice should be a woman of birth and fortune, appeared equally evident; and many were the matches proposed, and various the ladies chosen as rival candidates for his hand and fortune.

When these rumours reached Miss Lesly, she heard them with perfect indifference: but she had no sooner seen Sir Henry than, for the first time in her life, she sighed to reflect that she was not a woman of fortune. In Henry Sommers the most perfect manly

beauty was embellished by elegant manners and dignified deportment. His calm countenance, his deep-toned voice might, perhaps, have appeared too serious, but for the sensibility beaming from his eyes, the expression of benevolence and candour which lighted up his features and dwelt on his accents. It was, indeed, often objected to him, that he had habitually an air of langour and of melancholy ;—but that very air which, to superficial observers announced a sombre, repulsive character, impressed Eliza with far different feelings from the moment that her heart whispered she was the object of his attention, and that to herself she almost ventured to confess she wished to engage his love. She believed that Henry the *reserved*, the *dignified Henry*, required the consolations of sympathy, the soothings of female tenderness; and flattered by this persuasion, she began, unconsciously, to cherish hopes—to indulge anticipations of happiness. Eliza was not deceived. Sir Henry had at first only paid

homage to beauty, when he singled her out at the balls and other places of public resort in the neighbourhood. In addressing him her voice became more touchingly sweet. Henry listened with deeper interest, and Eliza, who could not speak without discovering the elevation or delicacy of her mind, the rectitude of her principles, the propriety of her sentiments, unconsciously completed the enchantment. He no longer doubted that she united those brilliant qualities included in his idea of female perfection, and *believed* with her it might be possible to realize the most romantic dreams of human felicity. The more he reflected on her moral qualities, the more did judgment concur with inclination to ratify his choice; and in surrendering himself to love, he appeared less to follow the impulse of passion, than to obey the dictates of duty. With the high spirited generosity of a romantic character, he found in the smallness of Miss Lesly's fortune an additional cause for satisfaction, he

exulted in the idea that it was his privilege to raise her to that station which she was formed to adorn, and that in bestowing her hand, she would receive from him all those adventitious advantages of wealth and distinction without which even beauty is neglected, and virtue unhonoured by the mercenary world.

Henry loved too truly to be presuming, and when he at length ventured to disclose his sentiments in a letter expressing his hopes and his wishes, and breathing all the ardour and tenderness of passion, he awaited the result with unspeakable anxiety.

"Can Eliza," said he, "esteem me sufficiently to unite for ever her destiny with mine? Does she hold me worthy to be her first friend, to be invested with that most sacred title of husband, in which I shall glory to my latest breath?"

The answer to this appeal was traced with a trembling hand, but the vows of Sommers were accepted. Miss Lesly confessed, that

if his happiness depended on her sentiments, she almost feared he had been happy even long before he desired it. This simple avowal exalted her lover to the summit of human felicity. Transported into a new existence, he found no language to do justice to his feelings; and it was only in shedding delicious tears that he could pour forth his joy and gratitude, whilst he reiterated at Miss Lesly's feet his protestations of eternal truth and fidelity.

If Eliza articulated not the same vows, he read them in her eyes; he saw them attested by looks of unutterable tenderness; for they now learnt mutually to divine the latent meaning of every word or movement, and were every hour more ready to believe that heaven had formed them for each other.

Marriage fixed and consecrated their union. Brilliant with youth, health, and beauty, the favourites of fortune and felicity, they might have excited envy, had they not irresistibly inspired good-will and complacency, and, by

the most engaging attentions and the most unaffected benevolence, obtained a pardon even for superior happiness. Henry could never shew too much kindness to those that admired Eliza, who, on her part, if she heard him praised, cast on the encomiast a glance of eloquent acknowledgment.

Soon after their marriage an entertainment was given at Rose Wood, Sir Henry's seat, to the principal families in the neighbourhood.

Whilst Eliza was at her toilette, he repeatedly entered the dressing room to inquire whether she was ready to appear; and when she at length presented herself before the circle, he adroitly took his station where he could best form a judgment of the impression produced on the company. With eager delight he watched the symptoms of surprise and admiration awakened by her elegance and beauty. He listened to those rapturous exclamations which sometimes escaped the lips of the spectators, and carefully collected the most trite unmeaning phrases which were ut-

tered in Eliza's praise. His eyes, constantly following her motions, would alone have been sufficient to direct attention to one object, even if perfect beauty and finished elegance did not always challenge universal homage. But Henry was not satisfied with this superficial admiration. He required that Eliza's mental endowments should be duly appreciated, and secretly demanded homage for the elegance of her language, the delicacy of her ideas, the propriety of her sentiments.

If he sometimes distressed her modesty by his own undissembled admiration, he often improved her observations with an address or refinement wholly derived from the heart, and infinitely superior to any thing exclusively created by the understanding. In fine, Eliza had in Henry a friend so intimately associated with all her interests, that she seemed in his society to double her own existence—for she constantly saw her own ideas reflected by his mind, as in a mirror which embellishes the features without de-

stroying the resemblance. With serene delight she reposed in the protection of a husband, who, had the merits of his Eliza been disputed, would have assumed a haughty aspect, but who, flattered by the respect and admiration she excited, had only the air of a man who was proud of his wife, and exulted in the tribute offered to her perfection. At the name of Lady Sommers, that name by which the woman of his choice was for ever identified with himself, his heart throbbed with emotion, and he felt again all the youthful transports of happy, mutual love.

Still the felicity of Sommers remained incomplete, till he had prevailed on the high spirited, the delicate, the reserved Eliza to dismiss her scruples with regard to disparity of situation, till he recognised, in the unrestrained freedom with which she disposed of his property, that cordial confidence, which can alone result from an harmonious union. It is only when *thou* becomes synonimous with *we*, and the distinction of *thine* or *mine*

is wholly lost in *ours*, that the wedded pair have realized all the refined enjoyments of conjugal affection. It was thus that Henry and Eliza came insensibly to have but one being, and to find in the marriage bond an union infinitely more perfect than could be created by the omnipotence of passion. With reason did they cherish the oaths which sealed their compact, and rendered it immutably sacred in the eyes of God and man.

If they formed plans for futurity, they discovered in every event the happiest auspices, because they were for ever associated in the same fate, and equally participated in all the good and evil allotted to each other. In imagination they contemplated, without repugnance, the different stages of human existence. They even anticipated old age with complacency, as that period, when, having long hand in hand journeyed on together, they should be mutually soothed by those tender delicious recollections, which come at length to supply the place of ardent hopes and eager expectations.

There were even moments when the image of death was not without its peculiar attractions, since they were pleased to dwell on the idea that the messenger of eternity might summon both on the same day and at the same hour, and that they should together plunge into the awful abyss, with the firm assurance of a joyful and eternal re-union. They looked forward with confidence to futurity, since they had in their own hearts a guarantee from destruction.

What a pledge of immortality is possessed in strong affections! blest as they were, supremely blest, they directed their thoughts to the one eternal source of good, reposed in the protection of their God—loved and believed, enjoyed and adored.

Hitherto they had no cause to complain of society. The first disappointment that occurred of this nature was in a manner the discovery of a new pleasure. It was so delightful to reciprocate benefits—to be under the inestimable obligation of assisting each

other! The mutual solace was a mutual treasure that enhanced the privilege of intimacy. In contending with the little cares and chagrins of life, they learnt the better to define the circle which separated them from the world; and when driven to that sanctuary within the heart, became even more closely united to each other.

It was Henry who most needed the soothing voice of friendship, since it was he alone who was subjected to irritation and chagrin by his intercourse with the capricious world.

Entitled by birth and education to claim respect and attention from society, he had acquired a relish for distinction which impelled him to adopt all honourable means for engaging popularity: but it is scarcely possible to indulge the thirst for emulation, or to enter with eagerness on the career of glory, without experiencing the conflicts of hope and fear, the agitations incident to care and disappointment. There are competitors in every pursuit, and rivals in every path, who, if they

sometimes grace your triumph, more often reverse your schemes and baffle your ambition.

Eliza sometimes sighed when she perceived that she constituted not to Henry that *all* which he formed for her, who had no other object: but reason soon suggested, that since men were called upon to act a distinguished part in public life, it was natural that they should take an interest in the pursuits of ambition, and challenge the perils and chances incident to the situation. Eliza not only ceased to repine at what she had once regretted as an evil, she even came to consider it as a real good, when she discovered that the pains inseparable from ambition produced a new source of confidence and sympathy between her and Henry, and that it was to her alone, whenever disappointment occurred, that he looked for encouragement or consolation. And what triumph is so precious to a woman of feeling, as to know by intuition, that in her voice—her tenderness—her sympathy, resides the all-prevailing charm which restores tranquil-

lity to the agitated heart of a beloved husband! How proud is she of the conviction that she alone possesses the power to calm his perturbation — to revive his hopes — to dispel his apprehensions; in difficulty to fortify his courage — in disappointment to soften his regrets.

Absorbed in one object, Eliza learnt without effort to understand Henry's character. The lesson was rather imbibed than studied, for her only teacher was love.

She could calculate with exact precision in what manner he would be influenced by the opinion of others. She divined what impressions he would be able to resist, and to what illusions of the imagination he must be peculiarly exposed. But such was the purity of his principles, and such the dignity of his sentiments, that her task was easily performed. The wounds she occasionally discovered were not deep, and with a little care and delicate address, she never failed to restore his mind to its wonted harmony. Henry

once uttered a tender complaint that he never was allowed any opportunity of repaying to her this kindness.

"It is not that I am less unreserved in my communication," replied his devoted wife; "I would freely lay my heart open to your view. Not one thought should be concealed from your eye;—but the world can cause me no chagrin. I have but one interest, my wishes centre in one supreme object; to see that being happy is all my care—my pride—my pleasure—my whole destiny!"

"Well; act as you will—my benefactress let me call you. Continue to dispense unnumbered blessings, which are only to be repaid with love. Henceforth my life is at your service; mould me to your wishes; dispose of me as you shall please. I can have no will but your's."

"I accept the trust, which I dedicate to your happiness. I am aware that my friend must in some degree enter into the ordinary pursuits of the world. Change of scene is

necessary to your perfect enjoyment. You have a relish for public life. I ought not to wish you to sacrifice such tastes, or renounce the dignity attached to political consideration."

Henry seized the idea these words suggested. He had long been disposed to serve in parliament; but desirous of commencing his career under the most honourable auspices, he waited for an opportunity of being returned a county member at the general election which was now approaching. Yet, however he might be disposed to embrace Eliza's suggestions, there unhappily existed an obstacle to their accomplishment of which she was wholly unconscious, and which he was most unwilling to communicate.

Much as she had studied her husband's character, there was in it one defect, which had hitherto escaped her observation, but which she was destined to learn by fatal experience.

Seven years had elapsed since their happy union, which was crowned by the birth of a daughter in whom each parent delighted to trace a resemblance to the other. Hitherto all had smiled on Eliza's path; but some few clouds now occasionally obscured the sunshine of Henry's cheerfulness. Even in the plenitude of mutual confidence, there was one subject on which false delicacy condemned him to silence.

Early in marriage he had sustained some losses of property, but liberal, kind, fond of shew and splendour, he was deaf to the lessons of prudence and economy; and thus the evil which might have been easily obviated the first year, augmented the second, and was aggravated the third, till finally it produced real pecuniary embarrassment. Independent of his repugnance to retrenchment, he had an insurmountable antipathy to accounts and calculations, and was consequently almost totally ignorant of the most common forms of business. His steward had soon occasion to discover his inattention to the state of his affairs, and, not choosing to hazard the loss of his favour, always proposed some temporary expedient—such as the cutting down of timber, or the transfer of money in the funds, to supply the casual deficiency. Henry easily reconciled himself to the advice, having great expectations on an uncle, who had returned from India with an immense fortune. But these fallacious hopes were soon blasted. The uncle married, and the nephew was completely supplanted by the birth of a son-and-heir. It was after this event, that the steward for the first time ventured on some observations respecting the disparity of *income* and expenditure. But Henry, who still felt it impossible to dispense with his accustomed

habits and enjoyments, was no less unwilling to make Eliza the depositary of a secret which might damp her spirits, than to allow her to suspect that he had one thought in which she did not participate. He was perfectly aware that the least hint would induce her to propose, and even to insist on retrenching every article of expense appropriate to her own share in the establishment: but it had ever been his peculiar pleasure to see her dressed in a style even superior to her station, and to seize every pretext for surprizing her by some elegant device of love, some new and expensive ornament.

Once, when he had been closetted with his steward longer than usual, he entered the drawing-room with a thoughtfulness on his brow which rivetted Eliza's attention. In meeting her earnest glance he coloured deeply, and hastily quitted the apartment. The next day Eliza turned the conversation on the folly of indulging in habits of luxury and expense, contrasting with them those simple, quiet comforts, which are the true sources of domestic enjoyment. Perceiving that this remark drew no explanation, she took occasion to introduce some reflections on the unlimited confidence which ought to form the charm of perfect intimacy.

For the first time, something like restraint

and dissatisfaction was mutually experienced by Henry and Eliza ; for nothing can be more painful than when two attached friends are under the necessity of communicating through the medium of general ideas their own personal feelings. In such a situation, it is palpable that one of the two parties, if not both, must be wrong ; a salutary warning that every species of dissimulation or insincerity is wrong, however it may be disguised by delicacy, or excused by tenderness. Unhappily, Eliza wanted courage to enforce an explanation, whilst Henry, too conscious of his error, wanted fortitude to confess that he had acted with culpable imprudence. Yet, he often wished, and always meant to disclose the embarrassment, till luckily, as he conceived, he discovered an expedient for repairing the dilapidations in his property, and even of procuring a considerable augmentation to his income.

As the period of the election approached he had often occasion to visit London ; and one day, at a public dinner, became acquainted with a noted stock-broker, supposed to be one of the most adroit speculators in the funds ; and who, from some accidental questions on the price of stocks, was insensibly permitted to take the lead in the conversation. John Foster (such was the name of this redoubtable personage)

was a man of fifty, a veteran of the world, who, in spite of a cold, forbidding exterior, drew attention, and even inspired confidence, partly by hazarding bold assertions with an imposing air of reserve, and intermingling truths generally known with falsehoods, which could with difficulty be either traced or detected. As it was notorious that he had been the successful agent of certain persons of rank and political consideration, who, under the cover of his name, trafficked in the funds, he might boast, without impropriety, of having safely conducted to fortune and prosperity, those who had implicitly submitted to his counsel and direction. That very morning, he observed, he had received a letter from a well-known banker, who, after briefly enumerating some lucky hits, for which he was indebted to his good friend Foster, remitted to his care a considerable sum, at that moment invested in India bonds. Although Foster searched his pockets for this letter without producing it, his assured look challenged belief, and no one felt disposed to question the accuracy of his statement.

Sommers had listened to the conversation with such marked attention that Foster was encouraged to prolong the subject; and he began, with much address, to draw a subtle distinction between *speculating* and *gambling* in

the funds. The former he represented as fair and safe: the latter as difficult and hazardous. He was naturally led to illustrate his observations by anecdotes, which confirmed the favourable impression already produced on the too facile Sommers. At length, however, he made a sudden transition, by enquiring whether he had not the pleasure to recognize the son of Sir Thomas Sommers. On being answered in the affirmative, he adroitly recollected an instance in which he had been so fortunate as to render him some small service. This recognition led to more familiar conversation, and finally produced an appointment for the following morning. That night Sommers had but little sleep. A new impulse was given to his thoughts, and he was wholly occupied with the scheme which promised to extricate him from care and perplexity.

To the character and situation of Foster, he would, under other circumstances, have felt invincible repugnance; but, with the persuasion that he had the honourable sanction of his father's example, his scruples were silenced, and he no longer hesitated to cultivate an acquaintance from which he hoped to derive considerable advantage.

At the hour appointed, he repaired to Foster's house, where he met with a cordial reception.

The speculator, whose reputation had been sometime on the wane, took occasion, perhaps with superfluous caution, to remark, that it was a day on which he was not usually at home; otherwise Sir Henry might have encountered many strangers who would have interrupted their conversation.

A few sentences from Sommers explained the object of the present interview. Foster, easily detecting his ignorance of business, after a short silence, observed:—"I believe I perfectly comprehend your situation. You possess a considerable landed property: you expend, year by year, seven hundred pounds more than your actual revenue. Your object is to realize twelve or fifteen thousand pounds, the interest of which would replace the deficit which occasions your present embarrassment; and which, as you have justly remarked, must be augmented unless it is diminished. It is certainly prudent to provide for the contingency, and I believe I can assist you in facilitating your views; but trust me, it will be well if you confine yourself to one precise object, without launching into more ambitious speculations. Be satisfied with retrieving your loss, and do not seek to double your fortune." Sommers shewed by a look how much he approved of this language. Foster, anxious to fortify the favour-

able impression and strengthen the confidence in his superior skill and sagacity, entered into copious details on the different funds, and on the nature of the speculation, always taking care to introduce some anecdote which might do credit to his own judgment. At length, perceiving that Sommers betrayed some symptoms of weariness and impatience, he added, that he entertained not the least doubt of succeeding in the wished-for object, but that it was impossible to predict with certainty the favourable moment for engaging in such speculations; that it would be necessary to raise money by credit, a thing easily accomplished by promissory notes, or some similar expedient; that in the mean time he required but a simple affirmation on the part of Sommers to authorize his future operations. With these words he presented a written paper for his signature, the terms of which were somewhat vague and unsatisfactory. Sommers hesitated a moment, then re-perusing it, with an air of abstraction signed his name and slowly returned it to Foster, who, throwing it carelessly into his portfolio, put an end to the conversation by assuring Sir Henry he should soon receive good news.

This first promise was speedily fulfilled. Within ten days Sir Henry received eight hundred pounds from Foster with a minute detail

of his proceedings, which, to an inexperienced person, was scarcely intelligible. Elated with this first success, Sir Henry instantly repaired to London, where, on seeing Foster, he eagerly poured forth his heart-felt acknowledgments. Foster listended with indifference, and, opening a drawer, produced an additional surplus of three hundred and twenty-seven pounds, which were still due on the speculation. Sommers, still more delighted, observed, that Foster deducted from this sum too moderate a profit. Foster replied, that it was according to the regular terms of commission, and that he never deviated from the established practice. As Sommers persisted in wishing to offer a more adequate remuneration, he replied, that if he should be so fortunate as to secure for his respected friend Sir Henry Sommers the augmentation which he expected, he would then accept, as a token of mutual friendship, a diamond of a moderate value. Sommers was enchanted with this apparent sincerity and moderation. Foster perceived his advantage, and hastily profited of the favourable moment.—" You are too liberal of acknowledgments for this petty service Sir Henry. I regret having missed the opportunity of procuring a far greater advantage. Had you but invested me with more power I could have turned it to better account. Unfortunately, there was not time to apprize you of the favour-

able opportunity, and if another should occur, it might again be lost from the same cause."— "What then should be done?" exclaimed Sommers, whose ardour was animated by success, and who felt his confidence but a tribute of gratitude to his benefactor. "I have been thinking," said Foster, "that by adding your endorsement to my promissory notes, I might raise on credit an adequate sum for the undertaking." So saying, he placed on the table half a dozen notes, to which he had already affixed his own signature, and which the unsuspicious Sommers signed with impatience, till he observed, what had before escaped him, that the sum was not specified, a blank being left between the first and the last figure, which rendered the amount indefinite. Alarmed for the first time, he made a sudden exclamation, to which Foster replied by saying carelessly: "Oh, that is a thing of course, the regular form in these transactions;" preventing further enquiry by an anecdote of an East India Director who had obtained, through his means, an immense fortune. Sommers continued to sign, but with a thoughtful countenance.

At length, laying down his pen, and looking earnestly at Foster, who had locked up the notes in his desk, he exclaimed:— "I trust, I confide in you implicitly, Mr. Foster: I commit every thing to your pru-

dence."—"With your permission, I have had in my hands a more precious trust."—"Lately!" reiterated Sommers. "Yes, lately; besides, I stake my credit with your safety; nay, I trust my very existence to your honour." These words restored to Sommers a momentary confidence, and Foster hastily ended the conference. It was true that Foster staked his credit; but his reputation was already declining, and he determined, by one desperate effort, to re-establish himself or to involve another in his ruin. If he succeeded in the speculation, it was his real intention to admit Sommers to a share of the profits. If he failed, he should devolve on another the tremendous obligation. For himself, he had little to lose, and was therefore resolved to put this last and only chance to the issue of one hazardous experiment.

In the meanwhile Sommers returned home more uneasy than ever. The sight of Eliza served but to aggravate his inquietude; and, for the first time, he experienced only pain in her society. It was in vain that he sought to banish his apprehensions by reflecting on Foster's former conduct. Several days elapsed and no letter arrived, although it had been stipulated at parting that intelligence should be regularly communicated. At length he was briefly informed, by a hasty billet, that his agent was

suddenly obliged to leave town ; that his speculations had hitherto proved unsuccessful ; that the loss had even been considerable : but that he hoped on his return to obtain an ample indemnification.

Sommers discovered in this lukewarmness, so foreign to his character, something to redouble his apprehensions ; and, unable to endure the torment of suspence, hastened to London, with the hope that Foster had not left it : but on reaching his house he had the mortification to learn from a domestic, who was evidently tutored to parry his enquiries, that Foster had departed on the preceding evening, that the object of his journey was not known, and that he was not expected to return for several days.

The first thought of Sommers was to remain in London until Foster should re-appear ; but a second and stronger impulse recalled him to his Eliza, in whose faithful bosom he longed to deposit his secret cares.

Whilst he was agitated by suspence, Eliza, unconsciously, participated in his inquietude. Alarmed by her husband's unusual absence, she reverted with terror to the perplexity and dejection she had formerly observed in his countenance ; and when, after many anxious hours of torturing expectation, she saw him enter her apartment, pale, gloomy, and ex-

hausted, she rushed into his arms, exclaiming—"Henry, my own Henry, hast thou then a sorrow that I am not permitted to share? Are we no longer one? Oh! if it be indeed true that we are disunited, let this moment be my last."

"My Eliza, you shall know all: I will no longer withhold the truth. I had already resolved on this communication; my resolution was taken even before you asked it. I feel that the world is but a desolation; that I wander in eternal night when I cease to think with thee. Let us be seated. I have much to reveal, and must throw myself on your clemency."—"Ah! believe me, the judge you have chosen already acquits you of blame." Then, placing herself beside him, and leaning on his arm, she re-assured him by a glance of ineffable tenderness, whilst Sommers commenced his narration, by avowing his embarrassments, the motives for his application to Foster, and the confidence which he had been induced to place in his prudence and integrity. "You see my error, Eliza; you see all my fault. Overwhelmed as I am with self-reproach, can I, dare I, hope to obtain your pardon?" Before he had pronounced these words, before his lips had even formed them, Eliza was at her husband's feet. She even knelt there some moments before he per-

ceived it. Unwilling to interrupt him, she had listened to his recital in silence, wholly absorbed by the powerful emotions it excited; but when she heard that friend, who had been so long habituated to the voice of praise, execrate his own folly with all the bitter asperity of self-reproach; when she saw her husband, her protector, the dignified being to whom she had been accustomed to look up with reverence, confused, interdicted, self-convicted, self-condemned at the sight of that noble mind, that honourable character; surprized by shame, and overwhelmed with remorse, Eliza beheld the image of Adam, at the fatal moment when he first heard that sin had made him mortal.

From all these mingled sentiments had she felt the sudden impulse to throw herself at the feet of her astonished husband. "What means this, my Eliza? After the humiliating confession I have been constrained to make, it is rather for me to kneel as your suppliant."—"Yes; this is my place," exclaimed Eliza; "when my Henry appears to distrust himself, he assumes a new character, and teaches me to love and honour him more than ever."

Astonished at this language, Henry raised her with emotion, whilst she continued—"No, my friend, you are not culpable. How was it possible that a suspicion of perfidy should be ad-

mitted to that breast which is the seat of honour? It is I only who have been to blame, in thoughtlessly permitting you to increase your expenses after our marriage. Alas! too happy in seeing the constant object of all my thoughts, I became almost criminally inattentive to every other."—Gracious God! who but Eliza should dare to utter this reproach? The agitation of Henry was insensibly soothed by these tender demonstrations of affection from the wife he adored, and he soon became sufficiently composed to consult on what steps he should pursue with regard to Foster. After some deliberation, Eliza proposed writing to invite him to their seat, where she hoped, by civility and attention, to conciliate his good will, or at least to penetrate his real views, and put her husband on his guard against his future machinations.

It was not without difficulty that she won Henry's consent to this proposal, for to him it appeared little short of sacrilege that any lines traced by Eliza's pen should be addressed to a stock-broker. His consent was no sooner obtained than she dispatched an old confidential servant, who returned in a few hours with the welcome information that Foster would be at Rose Wood that afternoon.

On being privately interrogated by Lady

Sommers, Belton related that he had been obliged to force his way to Foster's apartment, where he found him surrounded by men of business, with some of whom he appeared to have had an unpleasant altercation. Belton added, that in reading Lady Sommers' letter he became agitated; that he began to write in reply; and after blotting two or three sheets, suddenly started from his desk, exclaiming, no; I'll answer it myself. We may then expect Mr. Foster this afternoon—in half an hour. Thank you, Belton. I am obliged by your punctuality. You must be tired; go and rest yourself. Belton cast a wistful glance at his honoured mistress as he retreated to the door; then re-advancing towards her, he said in a low voice, that he had never before found it so difficult to deliver a message; that whilst he was waiting to seize the opportunity, he had overheard a disagreeable conversation, to which he should not have listened, but for his master's name being mentioned.

Lady Sommers was now all attention—Belton still wanted courage to proceed. At length, with some hesitation, he added: Some one enquired of Foster, who and where is this Sir Henry Sommers who makes you his agent? The answer to this question escaped me; but I heard another person say, the bills must be

taken up, or we come upon Sir Henry Sommers in two days. And you heard no more, Belton? No more, Madam. I thank you; I sincerely thank you; and hastily withdrawing to conceal her emotion, she rejoined her husband, to whom she communicated the intelligence.—"I see it all," exclaimed he; "the storm approaches; the thunder rolls over my head; I am cast from happiness and prosperity, and laid level with the lowest dust. And you, Eliza, who might have done honour to the first peer in England, you who must have been raised to the highest station, but for the chance I have hitherto thought so happy." He paused; unable to proceed from the violence of his emotion.—No, Henry, you pity *me*," exclaimed Eliza, "but with little reason—were I plunged into poverty, I should still be grateful to Providence for having united me to the husband of my choice—for having in him bestowed a treasure far more precious than every other blessing. Prove to me that I am sufficient to your happiness, and never shall I breathe a sigh of envy or regret. Come, my dear Henry, let us be prepared for the worst. What if we should leave this splendid mansion, if I still lean on your arm, I shall have no cause to lament the change; for in comparing what I leave with what I carry with me, believe me I shall still

boast of my unbounded wealth." "Oh! Eliza, what words are these? It is the dew of heaven which sheds on my soul a delicious balm! I am no longer disturbed with the phantoms which oppressed me. Hope revives;—I am born again; I owe my very existence to your matchless love."

At this moment they were interrupted by the sound of a carriage, and in a few moments Foster was announced. At the first glance, Sommers whispered to Eliza, "How is this man's countenance altered!"—"His countenance is indeed clouded," replied Eliza; "'tis the expression of remorse."—"Incomparable creature! you anticipate my meaning; you generously suggest my excuse;—you have learnt to divine my most secret thoughts;—you alone have the power to mitigate my sufferings."

Foster approached the unhappy pair in evident confusion; but quickly recalling his confidence, he began with the dry prolixity of a man of business to detail his various operations in the public funds, all, he insisted, undertaken at the express desire of Sir Henry Sommers—at his instance, and with his authority. He then enlarged on the unforeseen circumstances which had thwarted his plans, solemnly protesting he had always considered his own interest as identified with that of Sommers, and that he was in

fact equally involved in his misfortune. He only blamed himself for not having transmitted daily intelligence, though to little purpose, since they who once adventured on speculation cannot recede without certain loss, and by confidence alone can obtain success. "Whence had you the money employed in this disastrous speculation?" interrupted Henry.—"Of course the money was raised by bills to which you had signed an indorsement." At these words Eliza, by an involuntary movement, pressed her husband's arms, and not daring to trust herself or him at that moment, she led the way to an apartment, in which an hospitable repast was provided for their fatal guest.

The servant being dismissed, the subject was resumed by Eliza, who wished, if possible, to be the medium of communication between Foster and her husband. In answer to her inquiries, Foster frankly confessed that the loss would be considerable, but he conceived not irreparable. Sommers eagerly demanded the sum—reiterating the question with unusual vehemence. "I am unable to speak with precision, but I should conceive it will not exceed Sir Harry's fortune. Sommers darted on his wife a look of unutterable import, accompanied with an indignant exclamation. "We must keep our temper," rejoined Foster, coolly. I have been exposed to

many casualties, and I always kept my temper—with patience and courage."—"Aye, sir, patience and courage might do for you; but you forget I have been hitherto a man of honour." "Hold! Henry," exclaimed Eliza; "for heaven's sake be calm;" and following him to the sopha, on which he had thrown himself with the violence of desperation, she whispered: "Do not rashly irritate the man who has our fate in his power;—at least command your feelings till we have discovered our real situation."—Then turning to Foster, who had risen, apparently with the intention to withdraw, in evident displeasure, she thus addressed him: "Hear me, sir; I trust I am able to speak to you with composure." She paused, with an air so gentle, so serene, and yet so dignified, that even Foster was not insensible to her influence. He bowed with involuntary respect; and she continued—"It has unhappily been your misfortune—I well know it was not your intention—to bring desolation on a prosperous, a happy family, who had never injured you, nor perhaps one human being. It has pleased that Providence, which so long showered on us its choicest blessings, to prove our constancy by afflictions, which, I trust, we shall learn to support with patient resignation. We have but one child, a daughter, for whom we should perhaps have formed ambitious

hopes. It will be our future task to prepare her for a new, and perhaps a more happy station." Here her voice faltered; unutterable anguish was painted on her husband's countenance; even Foster cast down his eyes with some emotion. "What my husband now requests of you," continued Eliza, "is an exact statement of his affairs; a written affirmation of the obligations he has contracted to your creditors. Can you, and will you, Mr. Foster, in this instance satisfy us?"—I will, madam; tomorrow Sir Henry shall be in possession of every circumstance:—I pledge my word."—"It is not to me alone that it must be given," exclaimed Henry: "this angel requires it, and if you deceive her—a terrible vengeance shall pursue the falsehood. Foster retreated; he even appeared to tremble; then bending with reverence to Eliza, he replied, in faltering accents—"Yes, I pledge myself to that incomparable being whom man could not wrong. I will keep my word sacred. Would that for her sake I could recall the past!" He then quitted them with agitation, and even with contrition.

As Foster receded from the house, the afflicted pair, side by side, continued to watch his steps; his image seemed to haunt them like a phantom by which they had been appalled, and from which they could not avert their gaze. "At length, then," said Henry, we

communicate our thoughts without the intervention of words. We understand each other without explanation. Thou art good, supremely good, and I am all unworthy of the goodness—Enough of this; till to-morrow arrives we will not resume the subject."—Agreed," cried Eliza, "and let us admit to our tea-table our dear little Clara, who has been almost exiled from us these two last days." At the name of his daughter, Henry breathed a deep sigh, and mechanically followed his wife to the drawing room, where the little Clara sprung towards him, and with open arms inviting his accustomed caresses. But she was no longer welcomed with gladness. Henry kissed her cheek whilst tears swam in his eyes; then assuming a languid smile—soon chased by the bitterness of self-reproach—he gazed alternately on the mother and the daughter with an unutterable expression of mournful tenderness.

The apartment in which they were sitting was furnished with peculiar elegance. The long Grecian window opened on a beautiful lawn, and faced a hill crowned with the luxuriant verdure of May. The superb vases were embellished with flowers, which diffused through the air delicious fragrance. Still these agreeable impressions served but to fill Sir Henry with the melancholy presage, that they were never to be

renewed, and that this was the last time he should enjoy them. At length, drawing Clara towards him, and placing her on his knee, he said: "Clara, dear Clara, I see thou art thy mother's own girl; thou hast the same angelic expression of innocence and goodness."—And whose girl should I be," cried Clara, "if I am not my mamma's girl?" Then, with roguish smiles, half-whispering, she continued: "The new doll does not come—the fine puppet that papa promised me—a great tall thing as big as I am, that was to cost I do not know how many guineas! Why does not she come, papa—why?" Lady Sommers cast on her daughter a reproving glance. "No, let her laugh," said Henry; "see how well gaiety becomes those little cheeks, that move like the leaves of the rose, touched by the zephyr. Laugh, dear Clara; let not your father damp your smiles; life is happy to those who commit no faults: and," added he, in a lower voice, "to those who can be satisfied with the good that Providence allots them."—"It is in vain," said Eliza, "you would disclaim this girl; all her looks are your's; she is your living image."—"I could have wished she had resembled her mother so perfectly as to be another Eliza: but now, tell me, Clara, what should she do who resembles me?"—"Love mamma."—"Charming child!—to what truth

is she prompted by the heart! Yes! if you resemble me, you will love your mother; you will know that she is the first of women; you will study to please her; you will be devoted to her happiness; you will never leave her—never; you will have but to call yourself Henry, and she will caress you." Here he was interrupted by the screams of Clara, who, rushing from his arms, exclaimed "Mamma is crying!—oh, help poor mamma!" Without articulating a single word, Henry dropt on one knee; whilst Eliza, covering her eyes, sobbed out, "One word more, and I must die."—"Pardon, my best beloved, pardon—make peace for me with your mamma, my child, and retire to rest." The little girl, half playfully, led him to her mother, joined their hands together, received their mingled caresses and benedictions, and then cheerfully obeyed the summons of the maid, who came to announce the hour of bed-time. At the same moment another servant entered with a newspaper, which Sommers eagerly snatched from him, with the hope of beguiling his suspense: but he had scarcely glanced his eyes over the page, when turning pale, he sunk on his chair, and in answer to Eliza's inquiring glance, only pointed to the following paragraph:

"The noted speculator Foster falls not alone. A baronet is associated with him in those des-

perate enterprizes on the public funds to which he has been madly devoted. It is supposed that this gentleman, whose honour and respectability were never before impeached by suspicion, was allured to the undertaking by the hope of gaining a seat in parliament, or by the prospect of being raised to a peerage. His loss is severe; but however we may pity him, as an unfortunate individual, we must be permitted to observe that the nation would be ill represented by a stock-jobber, who, after having *bought* the votes of *others*, might very naturally be expected to *sell* his *own*."

For some moments both Henry and Eliza were wholly silent. At last he repeated, "'Whose honour was never before impeached by suspicion.' It is too true. I am no longer honourable. I have forfeited that title:—I must assume another." He suddenly raised his head, and fiercely added, "Yet where is the man who shall dare to pronounce that name before me, however crushed and disgraced?"—"Oh, Henry! even the feeble Eliza is sufficient to protect thee from such imputations. Leave her to attest before God and man that thou art the noblest, the most honourable of human beings. Renounce the world. Despise those that wrong you. Let us for ever quit this splendid mansion, to enjoy, uninterruptedly,

the privileges of intimacy, and the luxury of domestic affection. I cannot indeed promise you more love, but I shall invent new signs to communicate to you my feelings: I shall descend without a sigh from the station to which you raised me. In domestic occupations I shall but find amusement—even cares shall minister to our mutual enjoyment."—"Enchantress!" exclaimed Henry, "why cannot I accept such an asylum? Yes! I doubt not Eliza would embellish poverty; Eliza could atone for the absence of luxury, for the injustice of mankind, for the malice of destiny. We might still be happy;—but, dearest friend—I cannot dissemble the truth—I am unable to stifle the conviction that I have been guilty. I have to face something worse than ruin....disgrace....absolute disgrace....irretrievable infamy....insupportable despair. I know not the extent of Foster's engagements—I am not even able to conjecture them; but if it should appear that they exceed the limits of my fortune—if I and my folly must be dragged forth to open infamy—if I should have to pass under the yoke of the merciless creditor, or be exposed to the horrors of a prison—covered with shame—pursued by ignominy;—if I should be reduced to this, after my former peace and prosperity;—why then what should I do?—how would it become me to act? What would be

the suggestions of an Eliza, of a guardian angel, of a being unsullied by shame and reproach ?" During this agitated speech, Eliza listened in silent agony, her hands clasped in prayer, her eyes cast on the ground, or only raised to heaven with an ineffable expression of impassioned grief, her cheeks overspread with the paleness of despair.

" Let us drop this conversation," cried Henry, " to-morrow will decide every thing. To-morrow makes or mars me." With these words he threw himself on a couch, where he long remained in gloomy silence. Eliza took her seat by his side; but had no longer courage to address him. A few broken words alone betrayed the secret of their thoughts. Yet Eliza, reclining on her husband's shoulder, still shewed by every look and movement the tenderness of her sympathy, till at length exhausted by the violence of her emotions, she closed her heavy eye-lids and sunk into a disturbed slumber.— Henry watched her with melancholy satisfaction, fearing to disturb even this imperfect repose. As he gazed on her pale but beautiful countenance, he experienced a new and indefinable feeling which prompted him for the first time to address to her thoughts and expressions of love, of which she should be wholly unconscious. He scarcely knew whether he was still

in existence, so ominous were his presages, so dark the aspect of his future destiny. "Gracious heaven!" exclaimed he, "and was it for me to change the happy fate allotted us? Foul man, rapacious fool! never enough of honour, of glory, of fortune. We are misled by our ambitious views, our restless aspirations, and seduced from the simple path of peace and safety. Sleep on, dear Eliza; let tranquillity remain in thy heart; let the guilty suffer; it is for me alone to pay the penalty. What do I say? we form but one being; it is I that have struck the arrow into thy soul. Miserable fate! even from what exquisite happiness have I fallen!" "Yes," murmured Eliza in her agitated slumber; "yes, I dearly loved him—Henry." At the sound of these broken words, so strangely accordant with his own thoughts and situation, the unhappy husband penetrated with anguish shed a torrent of tears. At that moment Eliza unclosed her eyes. The morning sun illumined her apartment, and starting from her couch, with a sudden and confused recollection of the preceding day, she exclaimed, "Is the letter arrived?" "Not yet," said Henry, with a mournful sigh. "Not yet, you are sure?—Whence then this unmeasurable grief? Come there is now no secret between us." "None my beloved; we have but one soul, and till this fatal

missive arrives, let us brace our strength, and if possible, renovate our spirits. Come, the rising sun has a chearful smile, let us breathe the pure air, and open our hearts to the blessed influences of nature." Though Eliza was still feeble, she made an effort to obey, and, supported by Henry, rambled through the park in which she had spent so many happy hours, and visited the spot which her elegant taste had so richly embellished.

It was not till the afternoon that the promised letter arrived. Henry instantly went with it to his own apartment, unwilling that even Eliza should witness his first emotion.

The communication of Foster was brief but decisive. It confirmed the total failure of his desperate speculations; it explained the use he had made of Sir Henry's imprudent confidence, and finally announced a defalcation which greatly exceeded his whole fortune. But the most important part of the communication was contained in the postscript. He stated, that for the present he judged it necessary to abscond, and that as this measure, to which he had been compelled by self-preservation, might subject the Baronet to trouble and importunity, he earnestly recommended to him to follow his example. When Henry had read the letter, he continued to gaze on the paper almost uncon-

scious of its import. He still held it in his hand when his faithful servant Belton presented to him several demands for money, which the news of his misfortune had quickly brought upon him. " I know not what is passing, said the good old man, but it is right, Sir, to tell— " Leave me to myself," cried Henry, " when I want your services, I will call for them." Scarcely had his servant obeyed his last injunction, than Henry reproached himself for the imperious manner with which he had rebuked his intrusion. " A gentler tone would have better become thee now miscreant," cried he, striking his fore-head, " bereaved of every thing, no longer possessing rank or fortune, or even honor, is there a wretch on earth more base than I am? It is enough, let destiny be accomplished." With these words he rang the bell and Belton re-appeared. " Excuse my impatience, Belton, I remarked your absence yesterday; tell me where you were?" " In the porter's lodge, where I had been the preceding day." " And for what purpose?" With evident reluctance Belton replied, he had been endeavouring to drive away the insolent people who wanted to force themselves and their bills on Sir Henry Sommers. " Why should you call them insolent, they are entitled to justice? I perceive how it is; they abused me, Belton.—

What did they say? "Excuse me, Sir, their language was shameful." "Let me hear it, Belton, if you still consider me as your master, let me hear it this instant." "They are impudent slanderers; they pretended to say, that Sir Henry Sommers did not keep his word. What, said I, when he pays his tradesmen's bills regularly, and his servants' wages punctually, and is the best and kindest of masters? They answered, that it was with another's money, and that Sir Henry would soon be called to account, and that there would be people in the house to-morrow. If I had not been afraid to disturb you, Sir, I should have begged you to give me a warrant to commit them." "I am satisfied, Belton, you are a good servant, and an honest man; retire to rest. To-morrow, you say—to-morrow; good night, Belton." "To-morrow," reiterated he, when he was alone; "it is enough. I am pleased to find there is so little in the world to regret. Men are hard unfeeling beings, and I shall not be loath to leave them. I have been more sinned against than sinning. The loss of life and fortune will be some expiation for my imprudence; my personal degradation could be useful to none. For me the world shall have passed away, when my patrimony is alienated, and my memory disgraced. I will not live to be the

spectator of my own shame. I shall not taste the dregs of that bitter cup, which folly prepared for my presumption." At this moment, glancing at the letters which Belton had placed before him, he had the courage to break the seals, and to examine their contents. An indignant blush overspread his cheeks, and his eyes flashed with disdain. "What language is this!" cried he, "is it that of the master to his slave? And is it thus that Lord Weston, who was once so servile and so fawning presumes to arraign my conduct? Am I then condemned to every species of degradation? What is here—a letter from a friend, an intimate friend; I recognise the well known characters, and recall the intimacy which has long united us; in this there may be some consolation." Sir Henry perused the letter, then laying it aside with a sarcastic smile, exclaimed, "admirable generosity. He asks me privately to take up one of Foster's bills of which he has accidentally become proprietor. Such are friends, all but one incomparable woman; and how have I requited her constancy and affection?" At this moment he seized a pistol, which had been accidentally left in his apartment. He found it charged;—a desperate impulse directed his movements; another moment and he should be relieved from the burthen of existence; one

cherished image still flitted before his eyes, and the name of Eliza rose to his lips. At that moment he felt his arm arrested, the faithful Eliza stood before him, and snatching from his hand the fatal weapon, sunk almost breathless at his feet. "Thy friend is here Henry, thy last, thy inalienable, thy everlasting friend." Henry opened his arms to receive her, and they both shed torrents of tears. "Eliza, you now know all—you are convinced that poverty is not my worst misfortune; to that I would have submitted with patience. In the evils I once thought so terrible, I could have acquiesced with chearful resignation: but my whole property is not equal to the engagements which I am bound to fulfil. Ruin is my portion, disgrace attaints my name, even my personal liberty is at the mercy of creditors; I already see myself within the walls of a prison. I might indeed evade the penalty by an ignominious flight, but I dare not offer such violence to the laws of my country. In this extremity there is but one path to pursue, a hard resolution perhaps to one who has so largely tasted of happiness; yet more terrible in the image than the reality. Eliza, I cannot support disgrace, that last worst of evils, the sum of human misery. "I"—he paused one moment, then added in a lower voice—"have thought of every

thing for the future." "Stop Henry, you abuse my weakness, my husband shall never desert me; whithersoever he shall go, thither will I follow, such is my last and unalterable resolution." "No, Eliza, thou art still in the flower of youth and beauty; remain on earth to expiate my offence, to implore my pardon; and when thou shalt be called to the regions of eternal bliss, where virtue receives her recompence, then perhaps thy prayers may prevail, and I too shall be admitted for thy sake to a share of thy felicity." "There can be no felicity without thee; I can form no conception of the paradise to which thou art not admitted. We must both become guilty in the sight of Heaven; and both be suppliants for divine mercy; together we shall be rejected or accepted. Oh God! always together, never disunited." "Tempt me not Eliza to accept thy devotion; I grow enamoured even of the evil which is shared with thee; my soul recoils not as it ought to do from this fatal image; that word *together, eternally united* bewilders my reason. That thus a wedded pair should have lived and died together intermingling their last sighs is an idea that annihilates even death. Oh God! what is my language? I no longer know myself." "Be calm Henry, compose your spirits. Thy happiness was ever dearer

than my own ; I would have given my life blood a thousand times to spare thee a single pain, and yet I recoil not at the idea that thou hast offered to my mind." " What am I a ferocious ruffian, or only an impassioned lover ? What if I should detect in myself the jealous tyrant, who would hide from all other eyes the idol of his heart ? Must I then on the verge of death forfeit my own esteem ? I have need of reflection ; Eliza is too indulgent a judge. I may perhaps become better after a few moments of quiet examination." Do not imagine Henry, you could change my purpose, though you should unkindly deprive me of the consolation of dying with you ; for here I swear from that moment in which your fate shall be accomplished, I will pursue your steps : to live or die with Henry is my only hope, my unchangeable determination. Yet reflect, whether thy devoted wife could not soften even poverty and disgrace. I feel myself rich in the resources of affection and consolation ; perhaps our new situation includes other evils than poverty, and such as may at first glance appal your soul. Examine whether you are sufficiently fortified by patience to support calamity, or whether love alone may not counterbalance all the evils of existence. Fear not to apprize me of the decision, though in that you should pronounce my

sentence." Henry listened in silence, or replied but by the pressure of her hand, which he bathed with his tears. Eliza seized the moment to conjure him to take repose. He no longer resisted her wishes, and both exhausted by previous conflicts and agitation, had this night that heavy sleep which sometimes visits despair, as the gloomy harbinger of death. To awake to misery is like returning from a state of suspended animation to the painful consciousness of existence. Eliza had hoped, that when the feverish agitation of Henry's spirits was allayed, he would contemplate with more firmness the evils of his situation. She was deceived. With newly invigorated strength, he acquired new faculties for suffering, and existence so clogged with misery, so polluted by self-reproach, and the sense of degradation, became more than ever the object of his execration and abhorrence. The more, however, he reflected on the generous self-devotion of Eliza, the more he revolted from the idea of permitting such a sacrifice. To prevent its accomplishment was now his great object, and he allowed himself to hope, that by assuming an air of serenity, he might elude her vigilance ; soothed by this persuasion when she tenderly inquired for his health, he replied that he was better, and that he would take a solitary walk to collect his thoughts, and steadily examine his situation.

At parting Eliza detached from her neck his miniature, which she presented to him with these words: "I had thought never to part from this pledge but with life. I now resign it to your care. If it should be returned at our next meeting, I will consider it as an indication that we are both to continue to endure existence; otherwise I shall conclude that our sentence is passed, and only await your summons for the second time to unite our destinies." She paused, but suppressing her feelings, added, in a sweet familiar tone: "You accept my pledge. I am sure you would not deceive me. I know you will not be long absent." Henry pressed her hand with an expression of acquiescence. "I will but take my morning walk and rejoin you as usual. My Eliza, I shall not be long absent; the moments are too precious to be wasted. With this assurance she was tranquillized, whilst with the yearnings of a fond maternal heart, she hastened to her daughter's chamber, with that mournful impatience which is sometimes the presage of an unhappy destiny. In her way she had to pass through her dressing-room, where she had collected her favourite books, her best drawings, and above all a portrait of her husband in his happiest hours, when flushed with hope and joy, and exquisitely alive to all the charms of existence. She scarcely ventured to raise her eyes to that face

beaming with love and happiness. Whilst her imagination rapidly passed over the departed period, she seemed separated from it by an immeasurable distance. She shuddered in contemplating the abyss on which she stood, that fatal abyss of death, so revolting to one who had hitherto been occupied but with the dreams of hope, and the smiles of love ; but unknown to herself she possessed a natural courage which was now fortified by the fear of sinking in the esteem of Henry ; and after a momentary struggle she regained her firmness, and secretly confirmed her former resolution. Was it the approach of death that appalled her soul ? How often had it been the aspiration of her soul that it might be permitted to her and Henry to close their eyes at the same moment. But to die by means so horrible, so repugnant to nature, to duty, to religious resignation.—Eliza ventured not to pursue the thought, and desperately throwing herself on the mercy of Heaven, she could only articulate, " I cannot survive him, we must live or die together." With trembling steps she approached her daughter's couch. She hoped to gaze undisturbed on her lovely face, and once more at least to watch her innocent slumbers ; but to her surprise, she found the little girl already risen, with the intention of selecting the most beautiful flowers, having accidentally discovered that this was her mother's

birth-day. At the sight of her amiable parent, the delighted Clara rushed into her arms; but in separating with her little hands the beautiful ringlets which fell in disorder on the mother's cheeks, she felt the trickling tears and eagerly exclaimed, "You weep mamma; what has happened to papa?" "Nothing yet my Clara, but life is full of thorns which thou hast not yet felt. God grant thou may'st for ever be spared them. She drew Clara on her lap, and repeated her tender caresses. "Do you know Clara what it is to be a mother?" "'Tis to be *you* mamma." "What should that mother be to a daughter who is as good as Clara?" "What you are mamma." Eliza smiled through her tears. The fond mother doats on her child, and would see and caress her every hour. Nothing but necessity can lead her to quit this cherished object. She is unhappy and must submit to an inexorable destiny—such a mother must be remembered and pitied. In looking at her portrait, the little girl must think of that mother who so dearly loved her child." Eliza's voice faltered, and she had to turn away her face, to conceal the fast flowing tears. At that moment the maid entered who was to attend Clara on her morning walk. A sudden hope dashed into Eliza's mind, that if this beloved child presented her offering before Henry, it might divert him from his fatal purpose. She therefore

hastily dismissed the little girl and her attendant with a strict injunction, that she should seek her in the park, in a summer-house which had received the name of the observatory. As Clara withdrew Eliza listened to the light tripping step, and then sunk on the sopha in an indescribable state of perturbation, uncertain whether she was to live or die, and only fixed in the resolution never to survive her husband.

Forcing herself from this half unconscious reverie, she hastily traced a few lines to the wife of Sir Thomas Mortimer, recommending her daughter to her care, and imploring her to watch her unprotected childhood. Eliza would have addressed the aunt, who had taken charge of her own education, but, sensible of her strict principles, she despaired of being able to soften her rigid judgment.—"And who," cried she, "could comprehend the union that existed between me and Henry? If I am precipitated by affection into guilt, it is to God alone, and not to man, that I am accountable." She again took the pen, and addressed a few parting lines to her daughter; after which her mind became more composed. She felt re-assured, or at least prepared to brave the greatest evils, and once more repaired to the breakfast room, where, with emotions of joyful surprise, she beheld her husband awaiting her approach.

From the rapid succession of ideas in her

mind, she could have conceived, that a long interval had elapsed since their last interview, and to behold him again was to welcome him from a tedious absence. Henry shared her feelings; but this sudden gleam of gladness was soon obscured. There was a pale placidity in his dejected countenance; its expression was no longer *passion* but resignation—calm and subdued, the conflict had ceased, he was evidently prepared and resolved—but for what destiny? Eliza could not utter the enquiry. She espied the miniature she had suspended to his neck, but ventured not to ask an explanation. During their repast he assumed an air of cheerfulness, and even affected to speak of indifferent subjects. Unwilling as she was to interrupt this serenity, Eliza would have put the awful question, but the words died on her lips. She almost flattered herself that the storm of passion had passed away, and in that persuasion forebore to hazard one word, or even one look, which might recall its fearful agitation. Once only Henry appeared affected; the tears came into his eyes. He hastily arose, and, to hide his emotion, withdrew to a window. 'Twas the weakness but of a few moments. He resumed his seat, and the slight blush which passed over the pallid cheeks but heightened the mournful expression of his haggard countenance.

"You are not well," exclaimed Eliza, with a wistful look.—"I shall soon be better," he replied, "if you will but join me in a walk."—"To the observatory?" interrupted Eliza. Henry suppressed a sigh as he answered: "That is too proud a title."—"Call it then *Eliza's fancy*."—"No," returned he, with a mournful smile; "*Henry's folly*." She took his arm, and as they slowly proceeded on their walk both felt the reviving influence of the sweet morning air. For some time they advanced in silence, but on approaching a stately cedar, remarkable for its height and foliage, Eliza said: "Let us hail this tree with a last adieu: let us sit one moment beneath its majestic shade. This rural bench was placed here by your order Henry; and how often on this spot have we here breathed aspirations that we might close our eyes at the same moment."

Here grief suppressed her utterance. Henry experienced the same emotion, and both wept in silence. At the sound of the village clock Henry started.—"Another hour has elapsed: that bell strikes," cried he, "to warn men of their progress towards the end of life! Alas! to those who are near the last stage, what imports the subdivision?"—"Then we are both on the brink of eternity," cried Eliza, interpreting his meaning by a mournful presage: "be it so:—to live or die with Henry is all I ask

for!"—"Hold, Eliza! you misconceive me."—"No, Henry, I read your thoughts:—I anticipate you intentions and am satisfied." After a short pause, she added: "Methinks I should like to be buried under this stately cedar." She took out her pencil and wrote a few words on the bench.—"What are you doing Eliza? This is rashly to prejudge the cause. It is true we must leave this spot; the place of my birth, the asylum in which are deposited my father's ashes; the abode of my youth, in which I have passed so many happy years as a lover and a husband. Unworthy of that felicity which I have for ever forfeited, I had bequeathed to my Eliza this house, these gardens, the whole demesne, and yet basely risked the property thus transferred to another. I have squandered the fortune I had consecrated to your use. Like a prodigal and a villain, I have added fraud to improvidence and unkindness."—"Hold, Henry! I will not listen to these unjust aspersions. I see our destiny is fixed. I am ready to accomplish the sacrifice. Let us speak no longer of the future but as it belongs to another state—to a better world." Then, grasping Henry's hand, and kneeling with him, she cried: "Almighty Maker of the universe! behold two poor suppliants, too weak, too frail, to endure to live under the stigma of disgrace. They approach with humility towards their judge! For themselves, they presume not to

offer defence or justification ;—they bow their heads with the oppressive consciousness of shame and guilt! Thou hadst showered on them thy most precious bounties—wealth, honour, distinction, conspired in their happy lot ; and in the bosom of their family, the endearments of conjugal and parental love, filled up the measure of their felicity. Loaded with favours, accustomed but to blessings, they want courage and firmness to support the bitterness of adversity. In their happiest days, they have, perhaps, done some little good ; and never have they ceased, by praise and thankfulness, to bless that God whom they worship : the author of their faith, the arbiter of their conscience, the ruler of their destiny ;—shall such be judged with rigour by thee who, though just, art merciful ; good, supremely good, and overflowing with love for thy unworthy creatures—hear me whilst I implore thy pardon—whilst I pray for Henry, and supplicate for both !"

" Oh God!" exclaimed Henry ; " it is she alone who may ask to be forgiven ;—that matchless woman who has created whatever virtues I possess, and who would now even plunge her innocent soul into guilt for my worthless sake !"

Here, overpowered with the violence of his emotions, he covered his face with his hands, and his sobs became audible. During some moments Eliza uttered not a single word, so much was she impressed with awe by the sacred

majesty of grief. At length, Henry looking up beheld the innocent little Clara advancing to meet both parents: her face radiant with joy; grace, sprightliness, and gaiety in every movement. At the sight of this lovely child, Henry uttered an exclamation of horror and astonishment:—"What brings her hither? Must she too be sacrificed?"—"She comes but to present me with these flowers, which she has gathered in honour of my birth-day—her mother's birth-day: and shall she be robbed of a mother's tenderness, a father's protection?"—"Merciful God! what a wretch have I been! Pardon my rashness, and here I swear never again to spurn the precious gifts thou hast offered to my acceptance."—"And wilt thou indeed consent to live for thy wife, thy child?"

Henry fell on her neck, and struggling to suppress his tears, softly murmured: "If it be the will of God, if he will indeed preserve me for virtuous exertion and salutary repentance, I swear never to violate the first law of nature. Let us return to the house: it may not yet be too late. Oh, were this cup passed from me, all should be well."

The little Clara had by this time joined them, and with unwonted loquacity was expatiating on the beauty and delicacy of her flowers. Henry whispered to Eliza to dismiss the pretty

prattler, as he felt not quite well. Alarmed by this intimation, the mother instantly reminded her daughter of her morning task. Clara's sparkling eyes were instantly suffused with tears; but a kiss and a smile reconciled her to the injunction, and she quietly yielded obedience.—" Innocent creature!" cried Henry, " she deserved a better father!"—" Say not so, Henry; if you but live to form her mind, to guard her conduct, she will never have reason to repine at her humble lot.—But you are pale; you surely tremble!"—" No, it is nothing but a momentary pang:—I am already better;—I shall soon be well;—I know what medicine will effect my cure."—" You are, then, really ill. You could not, surely, abuse my unsuspecting confidence."—" I would not forfeit thy esteem for a thousand worlds!"—Eliza pressed his hand with transport. Henry returned the pressure with a deep-drawn sigh, in which apprehension was mingled with remorse. Naturally ingenuous, he knew not how to conceal, yet was utterly unable to confess that he had swallowed a slow poison, since he still hoped, by the timely application of an efficient antidote, to arrest its mortal progress; hitherto he had experienced no symptoms of indisposition, and he firmly believed it was not too late to counteract the effects of his former desperation.

They now approached the house; but instead

of entering by the common outlet, Henry passed through a private door to the library, where he knew he could easily procure the antidote, to which he trusted his future safety. On entering this apartment, the first object that met his eyes was the pistol which Eliza had the preceding day wrested from his grasp, and which, in his agitation, he had suffered to remain without discharging its contents. Shuddering at this recollection, his first impulse was to render it innoxious; and he was proceeding to execute his purpose, when an exclamation from Eliza rivetted him to the spot; and the next moment, the voice of Belton from an adjoining room explained the mystery.—"Where is Sir Henry? where is our good master? let him conceal himself or fly: the bailiffs are already in the house; he will be dragged away by force!—Oh, that I should live to see my young master conducted to jail!"

At these words Eliza cast a fearful glance on Henry, in whom surprise and horror produced an alarming change. The poison, which had been before dormant, was instantly excited to activity; and with a ghastly aspect he staggered towards a chair, his eyes still fixed on the pistol with some vague consciousness of his former purpose. Eliza now first perceiving the object to which they were directed, her terrors were renewed:—"Hasten from this house;—steal through the garden to the Par-

sonage, where you may have a temporary asylum. Leave me to receive these men. I fear them not. They cannot injure—they will not insult an unoffending woman."—But for the first time Eliza's words were unnoticed by her husband. Whilst she spoke, his features became distorted. A convulsive shivering ran through his veins, and, writhing with torture, he attempted to speak, but the imperfect accents died on his lips.—"Oh, God! what means that awful look?—speak, let me once more hear that voice. Henry, my best beloved Henry, what have you done?"—"Forgive, forgive me!" was all he could articulate. Eliza gazed on her dying husband with speechless anguish. The whole truth flashed on her mind. She exclaimed: "It is well. I am not yet too late!" She eagerly snatched the pistol, and true to her aim, the ball was lodged in her bosom; she fell, clasping the knees of her husband, who had made a last effort to rise, but sunk by her side with his arms outstretched to support her. In this attitude were the faithful pair discovered by the terrified domestics. Interred in the same grave, their mournful history terminated with this simple inscription:—

"IN DEATH THEY WERE NOT DIVIDED!"

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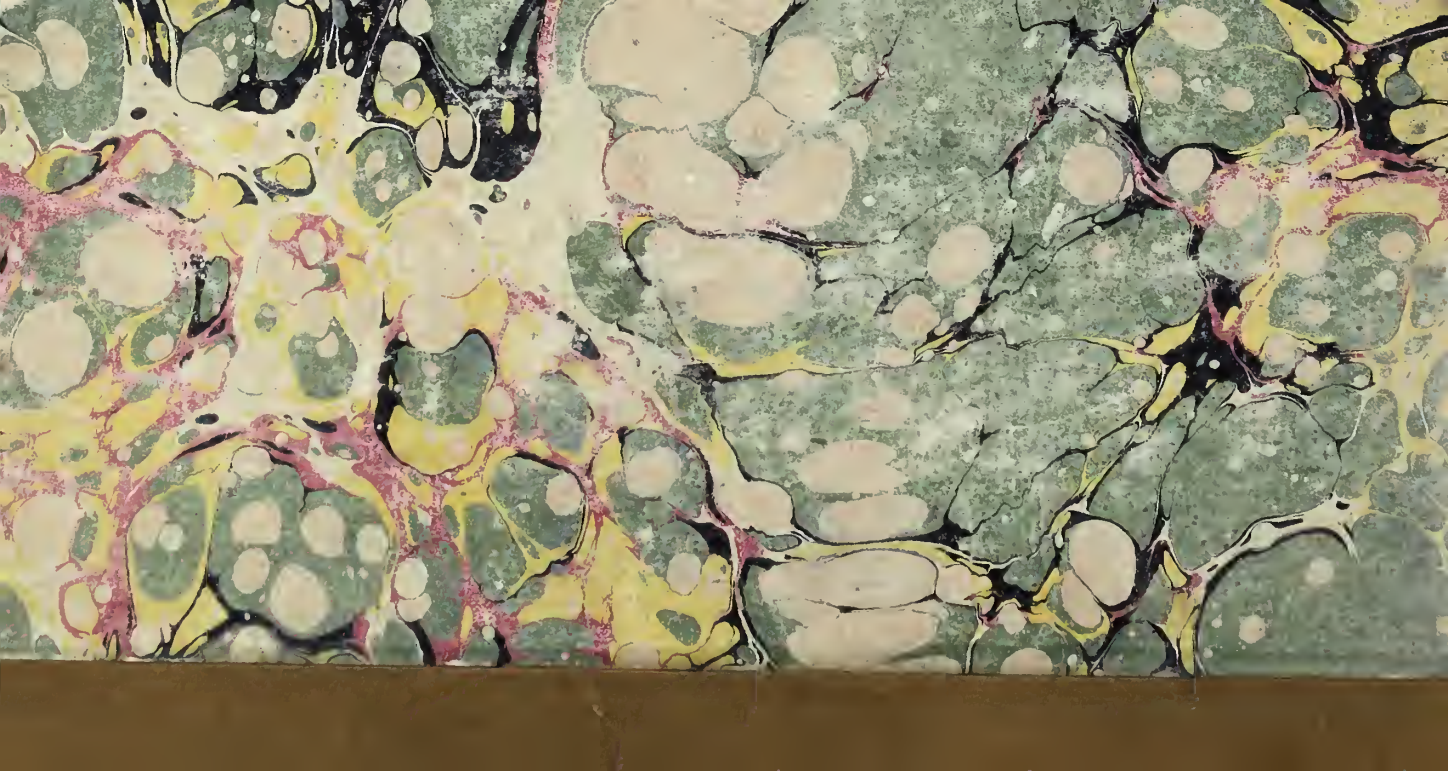
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